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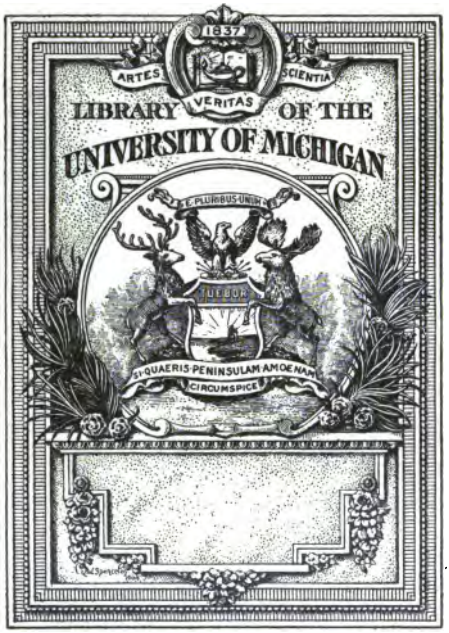
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# THE TOR HILL.

E. 1644

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"BRAMBLETYE HOUSE," "GAIETIES AND GRAVITIES,"

&c. &c

Horace Smith

"Oh! what was love made for, if 'tis not the same
Thro' joy and thro' torments, thro' glory and shame?
I know not, I ask not, if guilt's in that heart;
I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art!"

*Thos. Moore.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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# THE TOR HILL.

## CHAPTER I.

Pugnacious, stern, arm'd cap-à-pie,
The paragon of chivalry,
His spirit dances
To hear the trumpet's battling sound,
And bid his steel-clad charger bound
Amid the lances.

THE strenuous idleness which sometimes persuades a man that by vigorous exertion of the body he can dissipate the listlessness and discontent of the mind, had induced Sir Giles Hungerford of the Tor to call up his nephew, Poyns Dudley, who had for some time past

acted as his squire, and to desire him to accompany him in a morning's walk. When the latter heard the tolling of the matin bells, and saw by a glance at the window that every object without was enshrouded in a thick and drizzling fog, he could not avoid shrugging his shoulders; but, as he knew that it was somewhat perilous to reason with the orders of so stern a disciplinarian as his uncle, he threw a cloak of Kirkby Kendal over his back, and prepared to obey in silence. Forth they accordingly issued into the streets of Calais, and the sound of their footsteps reaching the guard at the Lantern Gate ere their forms could be recognized, they were roughly challenged as they approached. Wrapped in his own meditations, Sir Giles noticed not the voices of the sentinels, or else disdained reply, for which perhaps he might have been rewarded with a shot from a cross-bow, had not his companion exclaimed—"Stand aside, soldiers, for the governor!" At these words the guard fell back on either side, respectfully saluting him as he passed beneath the gate, whose vaulted arch

echoed to the clang of his massy boots. As he proceeded towards the harbour, in his progress to the pier, the density of the atmosphere increased to such a degree, that he mistook his way, and unexpectedly found himself up to his knees in the salt water. Knowing that opposition and difficulty of any sort did but increase the obstinacy of his purposes, Dudley fully expected to see him wade forward, and endeavour to accomplish his design by swimming, in spite of his heavy boots, and the loose mantle which he had wound round his arms; but the knight fortunately resolved to conquer the fog instead of the sea, and, turning about without uttering a syllable, renewed his endeavours at groping out the passage to the pier.

Previously to this little incident, he had been perfectly indifferent as to which way he should walk; but, now that an attempt had been made to thwart his original design, he would have perilled his life ten times over, upon its final accomplishment. Of a restless and fiery temperament, whose native element seemed to be

amid the shivering of spears, the clashing of swords, and all the uproar and turmoil of war, he hated the honourable post that had been assigned to him as Governor of the Lantern Gate of Calais, because it was deemed inconsistent with his dignity that he should join those frequent expeditions into the French pale, even up to the walls of Boulogne, which, however predatory in their object, were of so hazardous a nature as seldom to be unaccompanied by some of those adventures, ambushes, and surprises, which are peculiarly stimulating to a warlike and chivalrous mind. Even a state of peace, the rough tilts and tournaments of which afforded some compensation for the pleasures of real hostilities, and allowed him at all events to make war upon the beasts of the field, and revel in his own halls, was held infinitely preferable to his present existence, in which he was daily tantalized with the prospect of enterprises, marching out against the foe with banner and trumpet, while he himself was condemned to remain ingloriously within the walls of Calais. To a mind like his, thus fretting

and corroding with inaction, opposition of any description operated as a grateful stimulus; and as, in the absence of a more worthy antagonist, there was some little satisfaction, even in foiling the fog, he pursued his way to the pier, with as dogged a resolution as if he were preparing to run a tilt against an adversary in the barriers, or pressing forward to intercept a retreating foe.

Not without difficulty did he at last succeed; and we trust it will not be deemed derogatory to his knightly dignity, considering the morbid state of his mind, when we record that even this petty triumph was enjoyed with a satisfaction altogether disproportionate to the achievement. With an erect figure, a firm footstep, and a brisk pace, as if exulting in his victory, did Sir Giles stalk along the wooden way, keeping, however, close to the rampart, lest, in the density of the air, he might, by a single false footstep, enable the sea to triumph over the conqueror of the fog. So humiliating was the thought of such an ignoble conclusion to his expedition, that when, by his own calculation of

the distance, he considered himself to be pretty near the extremity of the pier, he seized the excuse of a bench for terminating his walk, and seated himself upon it; while his squire leaned over the parapet at his side, endeavouring to get a glimpse of the water beneath, since the whole town was completely shrouded from his view.

Invisible however as it was, there were various sounds that sufficiently attested the immediate vicinity of a populous city. The matin bells of the different churches and convents had not yet entirely ceased tolling; the voices of soldiers calling to their companions, whom the fog prevented them from seeing; the shrill noise of the muster-trumpet, the cheers of a party of sailors in the harbour heaving a fishing vessel down the beach, and the harsh grating of its keel over the stones, were mingled with the calm guggling and poppling of the waves as they were parted by the piles, and floated onwards beneath the pier upon which Sir Giles was seated. Though there was nothing very harmonious in this combination of sounds, it

seemed to have a soothing effect upon his mind, for he sat for some time receiving them into his ear rather than listening to them, and musing rather than thinking, in a species of complacent abstraction, when a sentinel stationed at the extremity of the pier began to cheer his imaginary solitude—for the fog completely hid his neighbours—by striking up in a hoarse voice the first verse of a new ballad, which was at that time very popular among the military adventurers to France.

"The Rose will into France spring,
Almighty God him thither bring,
And save this Flower which is our King,
This Rose, this Rose, this royal Rose,
Which is called a noble thing,
The Flower of England, and Soldier King."

Either vexed at being thus aroused from a more placid mood than he had recently been in the habit of enjoying, or indignant at the seeming disrespect of the soldier in presuming to sing before his commander, although the man was utterly unconscious of being within ear-shot of so august a personage, Sir Giles called out, in a stern voice—"Hollo, sirrah sen-

tinel! is this the silence you are commanded to observe upon duty? 'Ware the gauntlope and the little-ease, thou noisy brawler!" The poor fellow, who probably recognized the voice of the governor of the gate thus coming upon him as if it were from the clouds, was apparently not a little astounded at the circumstance, for he instantly ceased his song—nothing but his footsteps being now heard as he paced up and down upon his post with increased diligence and energy.

By this time the sun, which had been slowly wading upwards through the sea-mist, had attained power enough to shoot his first ray upon the top of the watch-tower of Calais, where the guard of bill-men were seen moving backwards and forwards, their arms glancing in the light, and the alarum-bell, as well as the curtall, or short piece of ordnance, which they were to discharge upon discovery of an enemy, becoming now distinctly visible; while the moistened banner, that surrounded the whole, hung in the calm air, clinging to the flag-staff. The churches of St. Nicholas and Nôtre Dame

next emerged to sight, and other of the loftier buildings gradually and slowly developed themselves, while the rest of the town still remained wrapped in a hovering cloud of fog, which seemed loth to abandon the possession it had obtained of the dwelling-houses, until a sudden and smart breeze, setting in from the sea, rolled it up like a curtain, and revealed the whole cheerful town of Calais glittering in the sun, and standing out in bright relief against the blue sky. Sir Giles had gazed upon it for some time without speaking, when his attention being attracted by a flapping sound behind him, he looked round, and beheld the new flag, which had been planted at the extremity of the pier, unfurling itself at full length upon the wind, and disclosing the words "Henricus VIII." which were embroidered upon it in large letters of gold. "Dudley," said the knight, after he had attentively examined the arms above this inscription, "I am no herald, no blazoner of bearings; I know that the king's standard gives a red dragon; I know the quarterings and the cognizance of the Hun-

gerfords, and that our present shield was assumed when one of my ancestors took prisoner the Duke of Orleans, and built Farleigh Castle with his ransom-money; but, as my heraldic skill carries me no further, I would fain know the meaning of yonder bearing in the royal arms, which methinks they were not wont to give."

"The red rose, Sir," replied Dudley, "is the favourite symbol of our royal master; it was worn by the Emperor Maximilian, as his volunteer soldier, at the siege of Terouenne, and it is here united with the white, to prove——"

"Tut, boy!" interrupted the knight tartly. "Though no clerk in such matters, I am not quite a dotterel. Had I not learnt as much from the ballad of yonder hoarse knave, there is scarce a butterwife in England but could have taught me this gossip's lore."

"If you mean the device of the portcullis," resumed Dudley, "it imports the descent of his grace from the House of Lancaster, that bearing having been originally assumed by

John of Gaunt, when his concubine, Catharine Swinford———"

"Psha! youngster," again interposed Sir Giles, with increased petulance,—"you are still wide of the mark, so prythee spare your speech. Have I not seen enough of this badge in the late king's chapel at Westminster, to know its import?"

"Perhaps, then, you mean the bearing of the falcon in the fetter-lock."

As the knight nodded his head in silence, the squire continued:—"This is doubtless given to prove his highness's descent from both houses, as it was the cognizance of Edmund of Langley, Duke of York. May I venture to inquire, Sir Giles, why it seems so particularly to arrest your attention?"

"Because it is an emblem of my own fate," replied the knight with some fierceness. "What am I, chained down and imprisoned in this accursed gate of Calais, when I would fain be tilting at full gallop to dash my spear into the throats of the king's enemies,—what am I, condemned to sit still when the trumpet sounds

to stirrup and standard, while the blood boils in my veins, and my very sword is ready to leap from its scabbard as I lay my hand upon its hilt,—what am I, I say, but a falcon in the fetter-locks?"

"Your present inactivity," said the squire, "is but the honourable penance imposed upon you for your former exploits; for Sir Gilbert Talbot, the king's deputy, knows too well the value of the good town entrusted to him, to send his best lance out of Calais upon such light and freebooting expeditions as those that have lately sallied from our gates. Charlemagne did not draw his trusty sword Joyeuse, nor were Morglay, Durindana, or Excalibar unsheathed from their scabbards, unless when the dignity of the enemy and the occasion warranted their employment."

"Buzz, boy! tell not me, nor hope to wheedle me with glosing flatteries as if thou wert talking to a popinjay. Little boots it the man-at-arms to have a war-horse too precious to be spurred among the spears; and small need has the king of knights and lances whom he fears to

expose to the push of a Frenchman's sword. I tell thee, Poyns, it is no one who has set the falcon in the fetter-locks but Sir Gilbert Talbot: it is the paltry jealousy of the king's deputy that makes my sword rust within its scabbard; and if I had but a fair excuse for aiming it at his bosom, and washing it in his blood——"

"Not so loud, Sir, I beseech you," cried the squire: "see you not that yonder sentinel has grounded his caliver, and, while he seems to be busied with his flake and touch-box, is evidently listening to our speech?"

"Foul fall the croaking knave!" exclaimed the knight in a still louder key; "is it meet that Sir Giles Hungerford of the Tor, who has broken a lance upon the king's skull-cap, should fear to wag his tongue before one of his own followers and vassals. Between me and God, Dudley, it makes my heart weep blood to think that I should be thus hooded and mewed up, when my very soul pants to be flying at the game."

"Under favour, Sir Giles, I venture to say

that his grace's deputy would prove himself but a wild and thriftless falconer, were he to fly his most trusty bird at the carrion crows. Let but the pheasant or the crane spread wing within the march, and I warrant me Sir Gilbert Talbot knows where to find the soar-falcon, without looking at his vervails, that will strike them presently to the ground."

"Now, marry then," quoth Sir Giles, "God speed the good day, and amen to the back of the saying!"

Seeing soldiers advancing along the pier to relieve the guard, the knight arose and stalked towards the harbour with his usual stately step; still, however, in so ungracious a mood, or more probably so absorbed in his own contemplations, as not to notice the archers who saluted him as he passed, or to utter a single syllable to his companion, until they reached the beach of the inner haven, when they were startled by the shrill sound of a trumpet, which although it was blown from the interior of the town, reverberated sharply from the walls, and the lantern-gate that fronted them. Sir Giles's

countenance became animated at the warlike summons, and he threw up his head, and inflated his nostrils, and looked fiercely around, as if to ascertain its meaning.

"That is black Boughton's trumpet of the adventurers," said Dudley; "nobody else has so strong a breath: he is blowing to horse and harness, and a merry morning will they have for a gallop into the French pale."

"The adventurers are not such a rude rabblement, as I have sometimes heard them termed," replied the knight. "They are stirring and dauntless doers, either by day or by night, in an ambush or an open field; and though they have neither nobleman's badge upon their shoulder, nor king's cognisance upon their flag, they have wrought as sore damage to the French as many a belted knight with his trained archers and harnessed men-at-arms."

As they approached, they observed men running, in a hurried manner, towards the interior of the town, and heard loud and confused cries in the direction of the market-place; when, upon reaching the gate, the sergeant of the guard

informed Sir Giles, that one of the adventurers had just ridden into the market-place, grievously wounded; and had declared to the populace, that the whole of his companions having fallen into an ambush, and surrendered themselves prisoners of war, were no sooner disarmed than they had been set upon, and barbarously massacred by the common people and peasantry; he himself having accidentally escaped, and being the sole survivor of the expedition which had marched out of Calais on the previous morning.

"Murdered in cold blood, and after being disarmed!" exclaimed Sir Giles, colouring with fiery indignation, and instinctively grasping the pummel of his sword—"This is a wild and improbable tale; some gossip's invention altogether, or the exaggeration of this craven runaway, frightened at the sight of his own blood. Fetch me the fellow, Dudley, to the guard-room, that I may question him myself; for if his tidings be sooth, beshrew me if the falcon will not rather burst his fetter-locks and fly, than be cooped within the mew till he eat his heart."

The adventurers are described by a contemporary historian as "a certain number of wild persons, as men out of service, and apprentices that ran from their masters, and other idle persons, who desired the lord admiral (who also commanded the army) that they might be retained in the king's wages: to whom he answered, that the king had appointed the number of such as should have wages, which was fully complete; and advised them to return into England, and not to loiter in Calais. Then said a tall yeoman—'My lord, there be many good fellows that with your favour would jeopard to get or lose, for their mind is to be revenged on the Frenchmen, enemies to the king and his realm.' 'Good fellow,' said the lord admiral, 'their minds be good, but if, for lack of conduct, they should be cast away, it were a loss to the king, and a great courage to the Frenchmen.' Then all the company cried, 'Let us go, in the name of God and Saint George!' Then, after counsel taken, he gave them a pennon of Saint George, and bade them adventure, (of which they were called adventurers,) and

further bade them, that if they got any booty, they should ever bring it to the army, and they should be paid to the uttermost; and then he gave them money, and commanded them weapons, and so the said adventurers, four hundred in number and more, set forward before the host."

Although it is evident, from the above description, that these desperadoes were little better than robbers, reevers, and freebooters, the adventurers had signalized themselves by several most daring and successful exploits; scouring the enemy's country, even up to the walls of their fortified towns, and not seldom enriching themselves while they were acting as foragers or reconnoitering parties for the king's army. According to the barbarous principles upon which war was then conducted, the prisoners taken in battle were sold as slaves, if they were too poor to ransom themselves; and although avarice was thus added to the ordinary incentives to hostility, it is probable that it rather mitigated than increased the evils of warfare, by occasioning many captives to be

spared in the hope of ransom, whose lives would otherwise have been sacrificed to the angry passions of the moment.

On the morning previous to that on which our history commences, Captain Brearton, one of the leaders of the adventurers, calling together his own company, reminded them that as they had no wages from the king, they were only supported by the plunder or ransom of his enemies; and, as they had ever had good chance in all their enterprises, proposed that they should boldly sally forth by themselves to see what God would send them, which he doubted not would be sufficient to supply them with merrymaking and good cheer for some months to come. To this daring enterprise his little band, as stout and hardy men as ever served prince or captain, cheerfully yielded their assent, and forth they accordingly sallied, crossing the marshes, entering the French pale, and pressing forward, without halt, till they came to the village of Ouaste, where they took a large and valuable booty of cattle that had been collected for the supply of Boulogne. The villagers

were too much accustomed to the incursions of these active desperadoes, to think of offering resistance, or to be unprovided with the means of raising an alarm. The hue-and-cry was soon spread, and two hundred horsemen of the garrison of Boulogne, who were coming forward to protect the convoy of cattle, galloping up to the sound with great cries, presently environed the little band of Englishmen, so that they could neither escape to their own pale, nor fight against such superior numbers and a mounted enemy, with the smallest probability of success. Seeing the futility of resistance, Captain Brearton called out to the captain of the Frenchmen: —"Sir, I am a gentleman, and this enterprise is mine. I have brought these good fellows into this jeopardy, wherefore I demand quarter for them, and we yield us all your prisoners."

The French captain received the proposition with great courtesy, desiring his troop to dismount and disarm their prisoners. While they were thus occupied, the peasants and churls of the country, but mostly from the village of Ouaste, gathered round them in considerable

numbers, offering to buy the Englishmen that were taken, who, as soon as the bargain was concluded, were accordingly delivered to them, and the men of war rode away. No sooner, however, were they over the hills and out of sight, than the villeins, as the country people were then indiscriminately called, and who in the present instance abundantly justified the application of the word in its worst modern acceptation, fell upon the defenceless Englishmen with pikes, javelins and knives, "and cut them in pieces," says the historian, "the most shamefully that ever was seen:"—an enormity to which they were probably impelled in order to revenge the losses they had sustained from the incessant attacks of these marauders; or perhaps, from arguing that as they were not recognized soldiers, they were no more entitled to the customary forbearances of war than pirates and highway robbers.

Although grievously wounded, one of the unfortunate adventurers had contrived to escape in the midst of the affray, and conceal himself in some bushes, where he lay perdu till night-

fall, and then finding his way to Calais, had entered it on the following morning, and relating to the assembled populace of the market-place the tragical fate of his companions, had occasioned the clamour and disturbance, and the sounding to harness of Black Boughton's trumpet, which we have already described. This solitary survivor of the whole party, that had sallied forth on the preceding morning with such confidence of success, was conducted by Poyns Dudley, agreeably to the orders he had received, to the guard-house, the infuriated mob following tumultuously at his heels, the women compassionately crying out for a surgeon to dress his wounds, and the men with deep curses vowing vengeance against the villeins who had inflicted them. In this manner he was conducted into the presence of Sir Giles, his grisly appearance sufficiently attesting the veracity of his statement. The ghastliness occasioned by his loss of blood, by the horror of the scene he had witnessed, and by the sufferings and terror of a sleepless night, was rendered more conspicuously appalling by the

gore, with which the greater part of his figure was deeply dyed, and which contrasted hideously with his wan and haggard countenance. While under the hands of the surgeon of the troops, he related the particulars of the massacre exactly as they had occurred; nor would it, indeed, have been easy to exaggerate the atrocity of the occurrence, had he been disposed to outstrip the limits of truth. Even while he was speaking, full confirmation of his statement was brought by some of the scouts and spies who were always retained within the French pale, and who had actually seen and counted the dead bodies of the victims.

Sympathizing with the fiery valour and enterprising spirit of the adventurers, so congenial with his own character, Sir Giles had always defended them against the animadversions of his brother-knights and captains, some of whom had been disposed to doubt the propriety of their employment, though all admitted the bravery of their exploits. He was proportionably exasperated at the cowardly and cruel vengeance exercised by the peasants, and during the above-

mentioned recital, had paced furiously up and down the chamber, fuming with wrath, puffing out his cheeks, grasping his beard with his right hand, and grinding his teeth in an agony of rage. No sooner had the wounded man completed his story, than he drew his sword, and kissing its hilt, fervently exclaimed—"Now by heaven and my holidame, and by the cross of my sword that belongeth unto knighthood, I swear that the blood of these brave men shall not redden the grass, and smoke up to heaven without an avenger. Give me my harness, Dudley, and let Roan Runnymede be saddled; and if the remaining band of the adventurers are for vengeance and the enemy's pale, and will accept Sir Giles Hungerford of the Tor for the captain of the day, I solemnly vow to leave my bones on the soil of France, or to wreak a terrible doom upon the doers of this foul shame to manhood."

"Were it not well, Sir," inquired Dudley—who, though by no means deficient in a generous ardour, possessed much more discretion than his impetuous and inflammable uncle—"were it not

well, Sir, to have the sanction of Sir Gilbert Talbot to your enterprise?"

"You may ask it, boy, an' you like it, but I have sworn an oath, and neither deputy nor master, neither king nor kaiser, shall keep me within the walls of Calais, if the surviving adventurers sally forth to-day, and bid me to their quarrel. Wherefore I say once more, bring me my black armour of Almayne rivet, for there shall be shrill whistling of arrow, and shrewd blow of battle-axe, and lusty push of pike, and perilous clashing of swords or ere these brave men come back unavenged."

Dudley knew the knight too well to attempt any resistance to his resolves, especially in so chafing a mood, and accordingly bowed and retired as if in acquiescence to his commands; but, instead of obeying them immediately, he hurried with all diligence to Sir Gilbert Talbot's quarters to solicit his consent to the enterprise. That commander, as Dudley had correctly stated to his uncle, had never been actuated by jealousy in giving a denial to previous applications of the same sort, but had been

solely anxious to preserve the services of so approved a lance as Sir Giles, for occasions of more pith and moment than any that had recently occurred. "By the mass, Master Dudley," he exclaimed to the squire, when he had stated the purport of his visit—"it likes me not that so trustworthy a knight as your uncle should peril himself in the quarrel of these wild rufflers and skyr-galliards, and jeopard heavy loss to the King's service for the gain of such swash-bucklers as these be. In the field he is as buxom and brave a soldier as ever spurred to the charge, but within stone walls he is ever willsome and upon the fret; as if there were no breathing but amid the spears. I know not which is the greater marvel, that being so restless a Hotspur he should ever have lived to be fifty, or that being fifty he should still continue so restless a Hotspur."

"But my uncle, Sir, has sworn a deep oath to lead forth the adventurers this morning, and has kissed the cross of his sword upon it; and as you are yourself a true knight and an ornament to chivalry, I beseech you force him not to prove

a recreant to his vow. For himself I can safely avouch that he would rather see the spurs stricken from his heels than be letted of his present purpose."

"Let him forth then, o' God's name, and lucky man be his dole! But follow him close, good Dudley, like a watchful squire as thou art; and take with thee fifty spears of the Lantern guard: for spite of their swaggering and cracking, I grudge to trust him to these Tom o' Bedlam adventurers."

With hasty thanks for this compliance, however unwillingly granted, Dudley hurried back to the gate, which he found surrounded by a tumultuous assemblage of the adventurers, waving their pennon of St. George, and shouting with eager cries "Hungerford! Hungerford!" The loud and angry tone in which Sir Giles had signified his intention of leading them to vengeance, having occasioned his vow to be quickly bruited abroad, they had flocked from all sides to his quarters, not a little proud of having obtained so distinguished a commander, and signifying by their shouts their glad acceptance

of his offer. Even the statement of the mission upon which he had been employed, and the success with which it had been attended, hardly succeeded in obtaining the squire's pardon for having so long delayed executing the orders he had first received from his wrathful and impetuous uncle. He took good care to add the condition upon which Sir Gilbert Talbot had yielded his consent, and having commissioned a friend of his own to select fifty able horsemen to accompany them, he gave orders for the saddling and arming of Roan Runnymede, and proceeded forthwith to assist in the equipment of his uncle. Upon this occasion it pleased the knight, who had several suits of steel and iron, to wear one of black Almayne rivet, which, as its name declared, had been manufactured abroad; but being rather a connoisseur in harness, as armour was then called, he had procured a helmet to be made upon an improved principle of his own, the two beavers and the vizor being united after a new fashion; and to this scull-cap of sure proof he confidently committed the guardian-

ship of his head. After the completion of this service, Dudley hastily trapped himself for the field, the fifty horsemen were already ranged in the street, the officers of the adventurers had mustered and ranked their men in good order, and the procession presently commenced its march through the town, to pass out at the Boulogne gate.

The knight, whose whole figure was cased in iron, though his upraised beaver disclosed his grim-looking face and beard; his stately war-horse, scarcely less carefully armed than his master; his handsome squire, glittering in bright-steel cuirass and cuisses; and the fifty well-appointed horsemen of the Lantern Guard, who formed the advance of the party, offered in the bravery of their equipment, a striking contrast to the adventurers that followed, whose band consisted of twenty-five light horsemen intended to act as scourers, and about two hundred archers and pike-men. When Black Boughton's trumpet blew to harness, it produced very little literal obedience, for, in this motley assemblage, few possessed more than

some disjointed portion of armour, while many were totally unfurnished with any species of defence. Their want of uniform, too, and the various fashion of their war-gear, imparted to them a somewhat banditti-like appearance: but on the other hand they marched in good order, preceded by their pennon of Saint George, and Black Boughton blowing a lusty blast upon his trumpet. They were all tall and proper men, their arms were in perfect plight for battle, and their lowering eyes, anger-inflamed faces, and clenched teeth, showed that they were desperate of purpose, that they wore their armour within, and that their hearts were steeled, although they did not beat against breast-plate or cuirass. The mob of friends and townspeople that followed them to the Boulogne gate, gave them three cheers as they sallied forth beneath the portal, and then running up to the walls, continued for some time gazing upon them as they passed over the outer draw-bridges of the fortifications, and wound along the dreary flats that bordered the sea in the direction of Boulogne.

## CHAPTER II.

Summon'd to die, the hero must
Lay his plum'd helmet in the dust,
Nor hope to tarry;
For Death 's a stern antagonist,
Whose dart no armour can resist,
No prowess parry.

THE tract of country over which the expedition passed, both as it approached the frontier, and after it had entered the French pale, attested, by melancholy evidence, the frequency of the inroads to which the inhabitants were exposed from both nations, as well as the unsparing and barbarous spirit of devastation that marked their incursions. Ruined villages, and the fire-blackened remains of towers and churches, were frequently encountered; the peasants who went out to till the ground inva-

riably hung their arms upon the plough, and planted scouts around them; alarum-bells were provided for every hamlet, beacons erected upon every height; and it might have afforded a subject of wonder that people should be found to cultivate a territory exposed to such perpetual ravage, but that most of the inhabitants, like the Scottish borderers of the same æra, were as often gainers as sufferers by this predatory warfare. The near neighbourhood of two such populous towns as Boulogne and Calais occasioned a considerable traffic, and as the necessity of supplying them with cattle kept the intermediate pastures well stocked, there was seldom any deficiency of plunder when a marauding expedition was undertaken by either party. Men as well as beasts were considered good prey and honest rapine; if they were not ransomed, they might be sold or used as slaves; and as the country people, influenced by the hope of plunder, generally joined the soldiery in these forays, and were, in fact, little better than rustic freebooters, with all the ferocity that such a mode of life

must necessarily engender, they were scarcely entitled to that commiseration which a superficial observer might have been disposed to bestow upon them.

Through this war-worn region did Sir Giles Hungerford and his party of horsemen press eagerly forward, leaving their foot at some distance behind, in their anxiety to surprise the doomed village of Ouaste. The hue and cry, however, was as prompt as the invasion; they saw the beacons blazing before them as they advanced, while the wind came pealing with the noise of the alarum-bells from villages concealed in the hollows, or hidden behind the hills. While thus speeding forwards, they encountered a spectacle which inflamed the passions of the whole party, and more especially of the mounted adventurers, to an ungovernable transport of rage. The bodies of their companions, who had been massacred the day before, were seen scattered about a field, or thrown into the ditches, not only betraying by their appearance the barbarous manner of their death, but proving by the indignities

that had been subsequently inflicted upon them, the brutality of the miscreants who had so wantonly sacrificed them. As this harrowing sight showed that they were now in the immediate vicinity of Ouaste, they clapped spurs to their horses, and, upon gaining the summit of a small eminence, beheld the village close beneath them; while the male inhabitants, probably guessing the object of this incursion, and anticipating their fate if they were surprised, were seen at some distance flying up an opposite hill, with the apparent intention of making for Boulogne. The eyes of the adventurers kindled at the sight; they muttered deep curses through their clenched teeth, grasped their weapons more firmly, and urged forward their smoking horses to full speed; while Black Boughton blew a blast upon his trumpet, which set the whole welkin ringing, and by its ominous sound seemed to make the hearts of the fugitives quake within them, for they looked eagerly back, and no sooner obtained a glimpse of the horsemen, than they increased the rapi-

dity of their flight with every symptom of confusion and dismay. Maddened with rage, and thirsting for revenge, their pursuers dashed down the descent with loud cries, and a tumultuous speed, that resembled an eager fox-chace rather than a military charge, a cloud of dust enshrouding the whole squadron till they reached the bottom of the valley, which was intersected by a broad though shallow stream, whose waters were seen to foam and flash as they galloped through them with undiminished velocity.

Too generous to enjoy the infliction of even a merited punishment upon unarmed peasants, Dudley could not behold without some feelings of compunction, the vehement struggles of the terrified wretches to escape, efforts which he knew would prove utterly unavailing, although they might protract their fate for a short period. No such scruples arose in the bosom of the rigorous Sir Giles. He recovered sufficient command over the troop as they emerged from the water, to lead them along a road that wound under the hill, with the intention of

heading and intercepting the fugitives, an object in which they had no sooner succeeded than he wheeled round, and, coming up the ascent on the opposite side, gained its summit almost at the same moment as the flying peasants, who had now no alternative but to fall upon their knees and implore mercy. The adventurers were preparing to rush among them and sacrifice them instantly to their wrath, when Sir Giles, covering them with his horsemen, declared that they should have full justice, villeins though they were; and that not a single individual should be punished, until it had been ascertained that he had actually participated in the massacre of the day before. From the report of the scouts and spies who were summoned to decide this point, the whole of the prisoners, thirty-seven in number, were proved to have been active agents in that atrocity, and Sir Giles instantly decided that they should die as soon as the remaining body of the adventurers came up to assist in this solemn act of justice. In vain did Dudley petition that they might be sold as slaves, or that their lives

should be spared on any conditions that the adventurers themselves might dictate :—the knight, though courteous and urbane in hall or bower, was stern and inexorable in the field. Had they been of gentle lineage indeed, some feelings of humanity might perhaps have pleaded in their favour; but he had so far imbibed the illiberal notions of the age, as to consider the peasantry of little more account than the beasts of the field; and, in the present instance, he felt rather as a righteous judge discharging a necessary act of duty, and doing a good to society, by purging it of such a ruffianly crew, than as directing any harsh or sanguinary act of vengeance.

When the foot-soldiers joined, he declared that himself and the King's troops had no wish to act as executioners, or deprive the aggrieved party of their just prerogative of retribution. He accordingly withdrew to a little distance with his horsemen, when the adventurers, having surrounded their unfortunate victims, fell upon them at a signal from Black Boughton's trumpet, and showing them no more mercy to-day

than they had themselves exercised on the previous morning, presently dispatched them with loud cries. As one of their own party, however, had escaped, though not from any intentional lenity of his assailants, they resolved, from an odd sense of justice, to spare an individual of the peasants. This man they accordingly preserved unhurt, and having mounted him on a fleet horse, they swore him to proceed forthwith and deliver their message to the Commander of Boulogne, which was, that, from that day forward they would spare neither man, woman, nor child that fell into their hands, on account of the shameful cruelty that had been inflicted upon Captain Brearton and his party. No sooner was he dismissed with this atrocious resolve, than they set fire to the village of Ouaste, which they burnt to the ground, and then returning to Sir Giles and his horsemen, demanded to be led upon some new enterprise within the enemy's territory.

Seeing them in this fiery mood for action, gratified by their daring spirit, and not without hope that he might signalize his incursion by some

bold and brilliant exploit, the knight willingly acceded to their request, and set forward in the direction of Montreuil. The scourers now took the lead, looking vigilantly around them, as was their wont, both to prevent surprize, and discover plunder; in which latter object they were so successful, and so well seconded by their brethren of the adventurers, that they collected a valuable booty of oxen, kine, and other cattle, though not without making a considerable inroad into the enemy's territory, and extending themselves to a proportionate distance from their own frontier. It had been Sir Giles's hope that he might encounter some straggling band of Frenchmen, headed, as they not unfrequently were, by a person of distinction, with whom he might honourably break a spear, and perhaps carry him prisoner to Calais; but as no such antagonist presented himself, and he calculated that he could hardly convey his booty into the English march before nightfall, he at length gave reluctant orders for the return.

Both men and horses were jaded with the length of the march, and exhausted with the

heat of the weather, and as the spot which they then occupied, commanding the open country towards Montreuil, sheltered by a wooded hill behind them, which they had just descended, and provided with a clear brook, seemed well adapted for a place of refreshment, Sir Giles commanded a halt. The cavalry accordingly led their horses to the stream, the drovers and scourers gathered their booty together, beside the same water, while the soldiers and adventurers putting off their helmets, and such heavier portions of their armour as were found most galling, stretched themselves in the shade of some aspens and black poplars that skirted the rivulet; betaking themselves to their knapsacks for their dinner, congratulating one another on the signal revenge they had exercised upon the peasants, or calculating the probable value of their booty in the market-place of Calais.

They had finished their meal, and Sir Giles was about to give orders for resuming their march, when, as he looked towards the hill in the direction of Calais, he saw ten or twelve knights, armed cap-à-pie, emerge from the wood

upon its summit, who no sooner perceived the party before them, than they halted, gave a signal, as if to some troops behind, and immediately afterwards a trumpet was blown, which was answered by two others, sounding from the rearward. Sir Giles hastily pulled down his vizor, and clasped it to the plackard, gathering up his horse's reins, and grasping his lance at the same moment, while he called aloud, "Blow, trumpeters, blow, to horse and harness, to stirrup and standard! Up quickly, ye that be good men and true, and each to his rank, for there be Frenchmen and lances of note upon the hill, that will require rougher handling than yonder ribald knaves whom ye knocked upon the head just now."

"Beshrew me, Sir," said Dudley; "it would like me better that Black Boughton were blowing the *desarmez*, or sounding the lodging after a goodly tournament; for, by the peacock's feather on his horse's forehead, and the same bearing in the rider's casque, methinks yonder knight in the blue armour should be the Duke of Vendôme; and I warrant me he rides not

thus far from Montreuil without such a heavy force, both of horse and foot, as may befit his dignity."

"Be it so," said the knight fiercely; "we are too old skirmishers to be frightened by a few plumps of spears; and, if we be but staunch, we may perhaps pluck the feathers from this same peacock-knight, and prevent his return to Montreuil."

"Unless he should happen to intercept our's to Calais," said Dudley, though his uncle heard it not, as he had galloped down the ranks to put his troops in array, and prepare them for the anticipated conflict. The squire's conjecture as to the name and quality of the splendid knight, who still retained his station upon the hill, was perfectly correct. The peasant dispatched by the adventurers with such an insulting message to Boulogne, had not ridden far before he encountered the Duke of Vendôme, accompanied by the Count Dammartin, the Governor of Montreuil, and a force of fifteen hundred horsemen, and eight hundred foot soldiers, making a reconnoisance

towards the English border, with the intention of proceeding afterwards to burn and destroy the country in the neighbourhood of St. Omer's. To these illustrious commanders, he imparted the sad fate of his countrymen, as well as the sanguinary notification with which he was charged, both of which were received with the fiercest indignation. Without attempting to palliate the enormity committed in the first instance by their own peasants, they argued that the revenge of the English, perpetrated in cold blood, and under the sanction of gentlemen and regular soldiers, was infinitely worse than the ferocity of the ignorant boors; and as the adventurers had now formally signified their intention of continuing this savage warfare, they learned with delight that their corps was in the immediate neighbourhood, and that there was a prospect of surprising and exterminating a band of desperadoes, who had long rendered themselves obnoxious to the whole French pale. Guided by the peasant, they accordingly pushed forward for Ouaste, and following in the rear of Sir Giles

and his party, the Duke, and a few officers of the advance, had, upon gaining the hill and emerging from the wood, discovered the objects of their pursuit as already stated.

As the French cavalry gradually formed themselves upon either side of the wood, Sir Giles was enabled to ascertain that they were by no means limited to a few plumps of spears, as he had first conjectured; and, foreseeing that the onslaught was likely to prove a desperate one, he looked anxiously around for the most advantageous position in which to receive their attack. At a little distance in the rear, the brook, impeded in its progress, spread into a reedy swamp, which extended along one side of the road, while the opposite was protected by a steep bank and a ditch. Upon this spot, as better calculated to resist the attack of cavalry, he took up his position; when, having formed his little troop, and placed himself amid their ranks, he thus addressed them—"My good soldiers and brethren, for such will I call ye, since ye have chosen me your captain for the day. I have led ye into this jeopardy, and be-

fore God, I will perish with ye, or deliver ye out of it. Ye are adventurers by name, and now is the time of your adventure come; for as your hands and weapons be yet red with French blood, yonder horsemen will have little ear for ransom or quarter. If any thing save our lives, it must be God and our own hardiness; wherefore let us swear to be true to one another; and if I turn horse's head, or offer to quit rank, I desire that ye may slay me out of hand." At the conclusion of this harangue the whole band, determined to cut their way through the enemy or perish in the attempt, cried God mercy for their sins, and knelt down and kissed the earth, and struck hands each with the other, in token and pledge that every one would stand by his fellow to the uttermost; and then, having made themselves ready to receive the attack, they awaited it with a fixed and desperate resolution.

But as the horsemen on the hill, although they had now formed on either side the wood, showed no disposition to give battle, Sir Giles began to apprehend, that, in order to make sure of their prey, they were waiting to be joined by

their foot-soldiers, who were not yet come up; a conjecture that was strengthened when he recollected the trumpets which he had heard sounding in their rear. In the hope, therefore, of anticipating their arrival, he proposed to his band that they should drive the cattle before them, and under the cover of the dust, and the shelter of their bodies, march up the hill and make for the wood, where they would be safer from the cavalry than in their present station; adding, that if they could maintain themselves amid the trees till nightfall, they would have good chance of escaping altogether, and making their way in the dark to the gates of Calais. This proposition being received with loud cries of "Forward! forward! St. George and Hungerford!" they goaded their cattle with spears and arrows, and confusedly driving off the whole mingled booty, followed at a brisk pace close behind them. Scarcely, however, had they advanced a hundred yards, when Sir Giles, whose tall horse gave him a more commanding view than the others, saw a solid mass of spears, with a pennon in its centre, gleaming above the dust

on the summit of the hill, which they had no sooner begun to descend, than he marked a second array of bright spears and another pennon, advancing up to the crest of the eminence. Although the men of the first squadron were rendered invisible by the dust, and the second had not yet completely surmounted the height, he knew by the motion of their arms, that they were foot-soldiers in good force, and becoming now more anxious than ever to gain the wood, before his troops should be exposed to the charge under such a fearful inequality of numbers, he called out to his men to advance at double quick time.

For some little distance this order was obeyed with alacrity, but their progress was soon impeded by an enemy they had not anticipated. Terrified and driven back by spear-wounds and a flight of arrows, the maddened and bleeding cattle came rushing down the hill at full speed, raising such fresh clouds of dust that they could neither see nor be seen, and acquiring such a momentum from the declivity, that they overthrew every thing before them. Though most

of the adventurers and soldiers who had been thus borne down quickly recovered their legs, they were thrown into a temporary confusion, at which untoward moment they were charged in front by the first body of the enemy's spearmen, while the cavalry galloping up, attacked them upon both flanks, which were now left uncovered; the whole party of the French setting up at the same time a deafening shout of "St. Denis! Vendôme!" to which the English replied by lusty cries of "St. George! Hungerford!"

The *melée* now became a scene of frightful confusion and indiscriminate slaughter, French and English, horse and foot, men and beasts, being wildly intermingled, while, in the density of the dust, friend and foe were exposed to an almost equal peril, especially as the roaring of the animals, the whistling of arrows, the clamour of the infuriated combatants, and the rival blasts of the trumpets, rendered all appeal or explanation utterly inaudible. Hopeless as they were of fighting with success against such superior numbers, and under such manifold disadvantages,

the adventurers yet held stoutly and undauntedly together, doing good havoc among their enemies, so long as their arrows lasted or they could preserve any sort of order in their ranks; but after this period they began to fall without intermission beneath the blows of their assailants, and their feebler and more scattered war-cry attested that their numbers were rapidly diminishing. At this juncture the Duke of Vendôme, riding up with his guard of horsemen, called aloud "Death to the adventurers, quarter to the gentlemen and soldiers!" an order which quickly completed the extermination of the former, while such of the fifty English horsemen as remained alive, gladly surrendered themselves prisoners of war.

The pugnacious Sir Giles, however, who had no notion of any battle but of fighting it out to the last, and who felt himself besides bound in honour, as well as by his vow, to stand or fall with the adventurers, dreamt not of accepting the proffered quarter, but continued to wield his weapon with a fell and obstinate spirit of desperation. His good horse

had hitherto borne him up gallantly, snorting with rage, fighting with his fore-feet, pushing forwards, as if to bear down all opposition with the long iron spike with which his chest was armed, and at one time actually seizing a French horse's ear with his teeth, and holding it fast until Sir Giles had destroyed his rider; exhausted, however, by the loss of blood from numerous spear-wounds in his flanks, Roan Runnymede at length sunk to the ground. Even in this extremity, the noble animal raised himself upon his haunches, and, as if conscious of his master's danger, as he saw him at some distance beset with assailants, he made one more convulsive effort and recovered his legs, but, in the attempt to move forward, fell heavily upon his side, and instantly expired.

Cased in good armour of proof, dealing out blows on all sides with an undiminished vigour, leaving an empty saddle wherever he struck at a horseman, deaf to the voice of Dudley, who followed close behind, and repeatedly called out to him that he was almost

the only combatant in the field, Sir Giles pressed forward towards the Duke of Vendôme, who was conspicuous, not less by the splendour of his equipments, than by the peacock's feathers that nodded on his horse's head as well as on his own casque. Apparently resolved to perish with the adventurers, Sir Giles seemed anxious to signalize his end by the death of the most distinguished among his enemies: with incredible efforts, he had actually fought his way within sword-length of the duke, and was raising his arm to attack him, when a blow from a battle-axe occasioned his vizor to start from its sockets and fly up, and as he hastily grasped it for the purpose of again covering his face, the whole beaver, although constructed and secured upon an improved principle of his own, came off in his hand. In utter amazement at this inexplicable occurrence, he lost for a moment his self-possession, and ere he could recover himself, he was desperately wounded in his defenceless face by an arrow. Staggering backwards at the blow, he fell to the ground, and would

probably have been dispatched by his assailants, since he was too stubborn to demand his life, but that Dudley bestrode his body, calling out aloud—"Quarter and ransom for Sir Giles Hungerford of The Tor!" The Duke of Vendôme, although the knight's last efforts had been aimed at his destruction, admired his reckless valour, and generously gave orders, not only that his life should be spared, but that he should be carried to Montreuil with all care, and his wounds be dressed by his own surgeon. A cart being procured for his conveyance, and an escort appointed to accompany the prisoners, they commenced their melancholy march, Dudley, who had marvellously escaped with only a slight spear-wound in the back of his arm, walking by the side of his uncle; while the duke, and the remainder of the French force, struck across the country, with the intention of executing their original hostile purposes in the neighbourhood of St. Omer's.

With a characteristic impetuosity, the knight, in his first vehement effort to extract the arrow, had broken it off at the iron head, which was

left in his face; but although the pain of his wound must have been sufficiently acute, it seemed entirely to escape his attention in his eagerness to explain the cause of his receiving it, and the wrath with which he vilipended the armourer for the clumsy workmanship to which alone he attributed the accident. Clear as was the fact that his own fancied improvement was utterly worthless in the hour of need, and heavy as was the penalty that he was likely to pay for his mistake, he clung to his invention with a tenacity increased by its failure; and had he been required to renew the combat, and again peril his life upon the security of his helmet, he would have disdained to make the smallest alteration in its construction. "Alas the while! Sir," said Dudley, as he walked by his side; "it was an evil hour and an unlucky deed, when you first altered the old gear of your armour. It ever mistrusted me that a shrewd blow of a mace or battle-axe would make the beaver start from the sockets of the plackard, and doleful is it to think that you should pay so dear for being wrong in your principle."

"God's precious, sirrah!" cried the knight, starting up in his cart, "what mean you by 'wrong in my principle?' I tell thee, thou doddy-pate, it is the rarest improvement in head-pieces since the alteration of the bassnet-piece and the barbet; and this would have been as staunch a morion as ever stood the brunt of two-handed sword, had not the cozening armourer (for which may the hangman have the twisting of his neck!) tackled it with treacherous solder. 'Wrong in my principle,' forsooth! When our brave king would assay a new harness of his own, at tilt with the Duke of Suffolk, and his vizor, sticking in the joint, left his face clean naked, and the duke struck him on the coif-scull with such force that his lance was splintered by the counterbuff, to the great peril of his highness's life, I showed him that, had he worn one of my improved helmets, he could never have been placed in such jeopardy, and his grace's armourer forthwith borrowed this very head-piece for a pattern."

"Would he had kept it," said Dudley—"and hammered it into a cook's porringer, so

you might have worn one of the old fashion, and have 'scaped this ugly wound."

"Tut! boy, 'tis but as a spur to the old war-horse. I have had an arrow in my flesh before to-day. 'Twill be the better for bleeding thus freely: but, sooth to say, it makes me an unseemly figure, and as my beard is sodden, I would fain let it trickle over the cart-side."

Any one who had noticed the grisly countenance of Sir Giles, with an iron arrow-head sticking in his cheek, and the gore streaming down his beard into the road, as he propped himself upon the edge of the vehicle, would have deemed that he was travelling his last journey, and that his thoughts would be of the priest and the next world; and yet to listen to him it might seem that he was whole of body, and hearty of cheer, and bound to some gallant tournament; for his talk was of nothing but feats of arms in battle or at barrier, and of every species of warrior's accoutrement; still, however, bringing round his discourse to his own incomparable improvements of all sorts, but particularly in the mode of uniting the vizor,

the beavers, and the plackards. "Was it not in the second year of his reign," he exclaimed to Dudley, "that, in the feast of Pentecost, being then at his royal manor of Greenwich, our valiant King, with his two aids, challenged all comers, being gentlemen, to fight with them at the barriers with target, and casting the seven-foot spear; and after to encounter together until each should have abided twelve strokes of the two-handed sword? I was one of his encounterers, and beshrew me if he did not deliver himself so valiantly by his hardy prowess and great strength, that he bore away the laud from his assailants; howbeit I then discovered the defect in his pacegard and poldren, which he ordered his armourer thenceforward to amend."

"I was yet a boy, and had not come to the use of the yew-bow at that period," replied Dudley, "but I have heard you mention the circumstance." If he had added "some scores of times," he would not have been wide of the mark, for the knight, though not generally garrulous, loved to dissert upon the improvements he had introduced in the construction of knightly harness."

"That was a pleasant joust and tournament," continued Sir Giles, "which the good Queen Katherine of Arragon proclaimed at her manor of Havering in the Bower; and great and gallant was the company of fair ladies, when Lord Umfreville brake his leg by the falling of his horse, and the Duke of Suffolk aimed his lance so truly against Sir Francis Bryan, that it entered the sight of his vizor, and thrust out his eye; and by the report of the judges and heralds of the jousts, there were broken five hundred and six spears when the pastime was concluded. Before Sir Francis's wound was dressed, I submitted to the inspection of his remaining eye my new sloping sight for the vizor, when he exclaimed,—'God's pity! Sir Giles, I had rather than a hundred angels you had shown me this an hour ago; for so I might have won the prize and saved mine eye, whereas now I have lost both.'"

"Before heaven!" cried Dudley, "I wish you had worn to-day an old St. Crispin's helm that had seen service at the battle of Agincourt, rather than this new head-piece with all its improvements; for methinks your wound runs fresher

than before, and you are likely to leave your best blood upon the road, ere we can cross the drawbridge of Montreuil. Prythee, my good fellow," he continued, addressing the driver in French—" put your beasts to better speed, and it shall be some silver livres in your pocket, for your prisoner is a gentleman and a knight, and has quick need of the Duke's surgeon."

" Tush, boy !" exclaimed the knight, somewhat testily ; " a little blood will soon turn a man's beard into a red flag, and I tell thee once more, my wound is nothing, though 'tis pity I drew not out the head, and that the arrow splintered in my hand: whence I conclude it was not of yew, or ash, or hornbeam, but rather of sallow or fir, as is the wont with these bungling French, who can neither make fletcher's gear properly, nor use it when they have it. And, in sooth, there are no bowmen in the world like our English archers, with whom even our neighbours of Scotland, though they be stout rufflers, cannot venture to do battle. Of this I was an eye-witness at the fight of Flodden Hill, where, after the great ordnance

had shotten away all the stones, provided for them, our long and cross-bowmen advanced, and did withall deliver their deadly arrows so lively, so courageously, so grievously, that they ran through the Scottish men-of-arms, bored the helmets, pierced the very swords, beat their lances to the ground, and easily shot those who were more slightly armed through and through. Nay, my good friend, Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice, who saved my life in that onslaught with the near loss of his own, assured me that he saw an arrow pass clean through the throat of an unarmed peasant, and still continue to cleave as merrily through the air as if it had not left a death behind it: all which doings I may, at least partly, attribute to my new method of pointing the arrows, which was then first brought into use, the heads being boiled and brazed, and then hardened with steel."

"I have heard," replied Dudley, willing to amuse his uncle, by continuing to discourse upon his favourite topic; "or rather I remember to have read, an account of that great fight of Flodden or Bramston Hill, wherein the his-

torian says, 'that no sooner did the bloody blast of the terrible trumpet give signal of battle, than out burst the ordnance on both sides, with fire, flame, and hideous noise, and the master gunner of the English part slew the master gunner of Scotland, and beat all his men from their ordnance, so that the Scottish ordnance did no harm to the English; but the Englishmen's artillery shot into the midst of the King's battle, and slew many persons:' from which account it would appear that the gunners of the Earl of Surrey did as trusty service as his archers upon that triumphant day."

"At a distance, I grant you," replied the knight, "but at near quarters and handy strokes, the bow and billmen of England were ever the most terrible in the onslaught. These gunpowder engines like me not, Dudley, and I foresee that ere long they will bear down all knighthood and good chivalry. Foul fall the shaven monk that invented this pestilent grain, and evil hap to the smiths that are ever discovering some new mischievous machine of the sort! Caliver, and harquebuse, and other

hand-guns, were not enow, but we must have heavy gear of every device, such as falcons, chambers, serpentines, basilisks, curtalls, culverines, sacres, and God wot how many more, besides the King's great gun of three yards long, that shoots a stone as big as a penny loaf. Dudley, Dudley! it will never be well for the gentle order of chivalry, whereof I profess myself a humble member, if bold hearts and stout limbs are to go for nothing, and cowards may win battles by thrusting pounded sulphur and charcoal into an iron pipe."

Hitherto, Sir Giles had been more than usually communicative, not only from the pleasure he found in conversing of his improvements, but from a spirit of opposition prompting him to prove to his conductors that he was not cast down by his misfortunes, as well as to convince his own wounds that they had not been able to silence him. The latter may appear a foolish and inexplicable feeling; but he looked upon the French arrow-head sticking in his cheek, as a clinging enemy still sucking his blood, who might be supposed to enjoy the tri-

umph if his victim flinched under the infliction. For a long time, therefore, he had borne up against his sufferings with a stoical resolution, but the powers of his body, rather than of his mind, began at length to fail him; he ceased speaking, because he feared that his faltering voice might betray his weakness; the remainder of his painful journey was performed in silence; and when the escort arrived at Montreuil, the exhausted Sir Giles was found not only unable to stand, but almost insensible to every thing that was passing around him.

As it was known that he was a person of consideration, and the Duke's orders as to his treatment were faithfully reported by his conductors, he received the most prompt and humane attentions; quarters were assigned him in the governor's house, his squire was permitted to wait upon him, and the most eminent surgeon in the place was put in instant requisition for his relief. Rest and restoratives soon enabled him to recover some degree of strength; but, upon disarming him, it had been found that the blow of the battle-axe had left

a perilous contusion upon his head, although he had never complained of any inconvenience from it; while the arrow-point in his cheek was ascertained to be barbed, and to be entangled in the bone, a circumstance which sufficiently explained the breaking of the shaft in his forcible endeavours to extract it, and left it doubtful whether surgical skill were likely to prove more effectual than his own first efforts. As delay was considered dangerous, and he appeared on the following day both able and anxious to undergo the operation, an attempt was made to withdraw the iron from the wound; but it had either so firmly inserted itself by means of the barb, or, which is perhaps the more probable supposition, the professional apparatus and skill of that æra were so little competent to its extraction, that, after much torture had been inflicted upon him in vain, it was pronounced dangerous to persevere. Nature, it was declared, must now be left to herself: instances were adduced in which equally dangerous wounds had healed spontaneously, and the patients had borne iron with

them to their graves, without suffering more than occasional inconvenience; and if the present case were destined to take a fatal turn from the nature of the internal injury, it was at all events desirable to avoid giving any more unnecessary pain to the patient.

So unfavourable had the symptoms become in the course of three or four days, that Sir Giles himself was the only one who felt confident of his recovery. Having taken up a notion that the French made bad arrows, and were such unskilful archers, as seldom to inflict a mortal wound, he could not consent to be convinced of his mistake by any evidence, and especially by one offered in his own person. It seemed to be an act of insubordination that his body should thus presume to set itself up against the firm conviction of his mind; and he took good care, therefore, whatever anguish or inconvenience he might endure, to attribute it to the blow of the battle-axe, rather than to the arrow-wound, which he always maintained to be trifling. Nature decided differently; his cheek grew hourly worse; fever and in-

flammation made rapid progress; unequivocal proofs of a fatal termination began to manifest themselves, and the surgeon at last, after lamenting his inability to extract the iron, felt it his duty to ask Sir Giles whether he was prepared to die of his wound?

"No, Sir Leech," replied the knight with a look that was much fiercer than his enfeebled voice: "and I will not tell a lie to oblige you. Fain would you have it said, that an English knight has at length been killed by a French archer; but never shall Sir Giles Hungerford, of The Tor, lend himself to any such false averment. Of the blow from the battle-axe, if it so please Heaven, I am willing to die within the hour; but had I no other harm than this bodkin in my face, I would gage within three days to encounter the best knight of France on horse or a-foot, in field or barrier, with lance, sword, or pole-axe."

Arching up his eye-brows, shrugging his shoulders, and turning out the palms of his hands, the French surgeon protested that Sir Giles was at liberty to attribute his death to

whatever cause he pleased, and that he was only actuated by a sense of duty, when he declared once more that his end was rapidly approaching.

"Little need have I then for your further company," said Sir Giles with a frown; "but hark ye, Sir Gaul, if I must e'en lay my bones in French ground, give it not out to your fellows that I was killed by a French archer, for it is not, and shall not be, sooth; and it were grievous to me to be thus slandered."

The surgeon laid both hands upon his breast, made a profound bow, and quitted the apartment, without reply; again, however, shrugging his shoulders when he had passed the threshold, at the strange and stubborn fancy of his patient.

Dudley, who entered shortly afterwards, had no sooner seated himself by his bedside, than the knight, extending to him his fevered hand, thus addressed him.—"Poyns, my good companion and trusty squire, for such have you well proved yourself in this and every brunt of fate, yonder blood-letter stoutly avers that I must

die, and of a verity I mistrusted, from the very first, that blow of the battle-axe or pole-axe, I know not which it was; and I have doomful feelings within me, that do indeed assure me my tournament of life is well nigh run, and that I shall shortly be dismissed to my last lodging; wherefore give good heed to what I say, and fail not to see my dying orders and request faithfully fulfilled. It is known to you that my singular good friend, Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice, saved my life at the battle of Flodden, for his hardy deeds on which day he was knighted on the spot. You are well aware that my kinsman, Lord Hungerford, is of evil fame, and a blot to our escutcheon, whom I need not care to endow with my fortune; for yourself, you are already sure of rich heritage, and will moreover receive goodly portion with the daughter of Sir Eustace Poyns, to whom you are affianced. I have therefore provided by my will, that if your cousin Cecil, my only child, should die without issue, all my manors and estates, lands, houses, and hereditaments, should devolve upon Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice,

in gratitude for my preservation at Flodden. To him have I entrusted the management of all my affairs in England, for which purpose I gave him up my house of The Tor; and knowing him by good warrant to be an approved soldier, I have to him also confided the education of my boy Cecil. From my long absence in the wars, I have not for some years seen either England or my son, and, by Saint John Baptist! my good Dudley, it draws blood from my very heart to tell thee what sorry tidings I learn of him; for Sir Lionel ever writes me word that he is not only of feeble frame, a misfortune which might have been well endured, but that he is of so dastard, craven, and womanish a spirit, as to mislike the great horse and the lance, the bow and the sword, and all exercise of arms and knightly practice."

"My cousin is yet young," said Dudley, "and you state him to be sickly. Doubt not that with better years and health, a more fiery spirit will be kindled, and that he will yet prove himself a true and valiant Hungerford."

"Alas the while! my good Poyns, I have

not told you all; for his guardian adds that he is shy and sullen, shunning all accost, and ever puling and moping in the mumps; and moreover, that he fears his faculties to be so frail that he will grow up to be little better than a simple-witted innocent. Wherefore, as I would not that he should be enrolled a knight, only perchance to prove a recreant to the order, and a dishonour to his lineage, it is my will that he should never wear harness, but marry so soon as he comes to man's estate, in the hope that he may raise up an heir more able than himself to sustain our honours and our escutcheon; and finally, as I wish not a race of gulls, dotterels, and dunces, to descend from his loins, and as Sir Lionel and his present tutor are doubtful of his wits and hopeless of his scholarship, I desire that he may be straightway placed with the Abbot of Glastonbury, who is a good and learned clerk, and moreover well skilled in the breeding of youth. Now tell me, my good Dudley, do you bear all this clearly in your mind? and will you promise to be as faithful to me after death, as you have been

in my life-time, by conveying these instructions to Sir Lionel, and caring that they be carried into strict execution ?"

" Every particular is impressed deeply on my mind," replied Dudley ; " and I pledge myself to see your wishes fulfilled ; but were it not well that you should record them in a letter, that so I may have warrant to Sir Lionel ?"

" Right, boy, right ; and prythee indite it for my signature incontinently, for I was ever more ready at handling a lance than a pen, and now, when both head and hand are beginning to fail me, I should make but a sorry scribe."

Dudley withdrew to prepare the letter, and returning when he had completed it, presented it to his uncle, who, as he signed it, uttered the first sigh that had yet escaped his lips, and exclaimed, in a regretful tone, " Ah, Dudley, Dudley ! I shall soon lie in the dark and deaf grave, where I shall neither see harnessed knights, barbed steeds, and brandished lances ; nor hear herald cry to the onset at tilt or tournament. My heart shall leap no more at the loved sound of the trumpet : I shall never more spur Roan Runnymede among the

spears, nor sit at gay banquet, nor listen to minstrel's song, nor gaze upon the bright eyes of beauty. Farewell, my goodly mansion of The Tor, my parks and manors, my wide chaces and pleasant woodlands! I shall never again make ye echo to the bugle horn, as I hunt the stag; nor ride merrily amid your green trees with hawk and falcon. Let me, at least, have my helmet hung up in Glastonbury Church, with a brass-inlayed stone beneath, that it may be hereafter known there was once such a knight as Sir Giles Hungerford, of The Tor!"

"Truly, Sir," replied Dudley, who had not expected to find his uncle in so desponding a mood, "you must endeavour to forget the pleasures of this world, and, if it like you to have ghostly comfort and be shriven, I can bring you a priest of the French King's Scottish guard, who is now at Montreuil, and speaks good English."

"I like not these Scotsmen's white coats, guarded with silver bullion; nor do they handle their weapons so cleanly as our Kentish or Somersetshire bowmen; but as their priest may

better understand his craft than his employers their's, let him, o' God's name! do me his good offices."

"I know not, good father," said the knight, when the holy man entered his apartment, "that I have done aught to incur the censure of holy mother church, or to need her absolution and pardon. I have made two pilgrimages to our Lady of Walsingham, and one to Saint Thomas à Becket, giving annually a silver chalice and six wax-lights to the former, and to the latter, a green velvet altar-pall for festivals, a Paschal taper, and a cope for the quire, to be worn by the priest out of mass-time. To the chantrey of Farleigh, I have presented a grail, a psalter, and an antiphoner, all three being illuminated and bound with gold clasps; besides a font, with a lock and key, to prevent the water from being stolen. I have ever put an angel in the candlestick upon Candlemas-day, besides giving alms to the poor at Allhallow Mass, and the Feast of Pentecost; and by my will, I have not only provided eight wax-lights for the chapel of St. Joseph of Ari-

mathea, at Glastonbury, but have made endowment for saying a special mass for the repose of my soul for ever, after every tolling of the Ave bell in the morning."

"These are good deeds, my son, which assuredly will not be forgotten, but it rather becomes thee now to recal such peccadilloes or graver offences as may need repentance and absolution, than to vaunt thy righteous doings, however seemly. Hast thou no sins with which thou canst charge thy conscience?"

"I do remind me, good father, that when his Grace's troops lay beyond Bayonne, waiting the supplies which the King of Arragon should have sent us, myself and the Baron of Burford, with a party of demi-lances and custrils, crossed the river of St. Mary, and attacked a French squadron, then making an ascry; pursuing them so far that we fell into an ambush where many of our best men were done to death, which hath ever grieved me, seeing that I was reproved by the Lord Marquess for acting without orders. And at the fight of Terouenne, I forbore to slay a part of my prisoners as I had

been counselled, whereby they rose and destroyed their guard, and plundered our tents, which hath since lain heavy at my heart."

"This were soon pardoned thee, my son, the more readily as it arose from feelings of Christian clemency. Hast thou nought else to confess?"

"Nothing, save that I did once, out of a grudge to the good Abbot of Glastonbury, which has, however, been well reconciled, shoot three of his fattest bucks with a cross-bow, but I have provided by my will eight wax-lights, as I told you, for the Chapel of St. Joseph of Arimathea."

"Eight waxen sizes, my son, are but a sorry retribution for so grave a misdeed."

"Why then, o' God's name," cried the knight, testily; "let them, an' you will, be whole quarrions"—(which were large square pieces of wax, with a wick in them,)—"and prythee keep no more coil about the Abbot's bucks which cost him never a venison-pasty the less; but do your shriving work gently and quickly, for I feel that I am not long to live."

The priest having prayed for some time by his side, and administered the viaticum, withdrew, and when Dudley re-entered the chamber, his uncle declared that he felt more comforted in his mind, and was perfectly resigned to his fate. "But tell me, good Poyns," he enquired, "what paper have you yonder in your hand?"

"A trumpeter has just arrived from Calais, bringing a message to the governor of Montreuil," replied the squire; "and this letter for yourself, which bears the signet of Sir Gilbert Talbot." The knight took the paper, and read aloud the superscription—"To my right worshipful and especial good friend, Sir Giles Hungerford of The Tor:—give these with all diligence. Haste! haste! haste! post haste!" when he returned the packet to the squire, desiring him to cut the silk, and break the wax, and read the contents, which he added could be of little interest, since he had finally done with all the affairs of this world. Sir Gilbert stated in his letter that he had no sooner learnt Sir Giles's unfortunate capture, than he dis-

patched the present trumpeter to ascertain the amount of his ransom-money, which he undertook to forward within twelve hours after receiving a reply; adding, that as there was little stirring, he had sent a challenge to the captain of Montreuil, inviting him to select six gentlemen of his garrison to meet six gentlemen of the garrison of Calais, in the plain of Margesson, that they might fight together for the love of their respective ladies. This singular remnant of the practices of chivalry was not unfrequently adopted, even so late as Henry the Eighth's time, to relieve the wearisomeness of a siege, or the languor of inactive hostilities: and as Sir Gilbert, although he would not trust the wild and rash valour of the knight to the chance of war upon every foray into the French pale, would confidently pit him against any even numbers in the world, he concluded his letter by stating, that the day of encounter should be postponed until he was sufficiently recovered to become one of the champions.

His communication was meant in all kindness to the wounded knight, but its effect corre-

sponded not with the intention, for he had no sooner heard it than he started up in his bed, exclaiming eagerly—" Now by heavens and my holidame! I never thought till now that it could be such bitterness to die.—Die! By the mass! I must not and will not quit life, till I have once more struck fire with my sword upon a Frenchman's steel scull-cap. And see, boy, I am already better—I am well. Reach me my lance, good Dudley, and hand me down my harness, for I am stout of heart and limb, and able to overset and dash to the ground both horse and horsemen."—At these words he fell back in his bed, utterly exhausted by the efforts he had made, and after having remained some time silent, sunk into uneasy slumber. On his awaking he was light-headed, and his wandering thoughts, compounded of his religious exercises with the priest, and the projected encounter with the French knights, suggested to him a beatific vision, in which christianity and chivalry were strangely blended. Imagining himself to be again bestriding Roan Runnymede in some Elysium of departed knights, he

declared that he saw priests, friars, and abbots, armed *cap-à-pie*, mounted on stately war-horses, and spurring against each other at tilt and tournament; the whole being so distinctly pictured to his mental eye, that he described the splendour of their several equipments with great exactness.

Another sleep succeeded to this rhapsody, and in the short lucid interval that was granted him when he again awoke, he most earnestly exhorted Dudley never to wear any other helmet in battle than one constructed upon his improved principle; and having finally intreated him to convey his last blessing to his son Cecil, he gently squeezed his hand, and almost immediately expired.

## CHAPTER III.

Ye gossips, alewives, crones!—with jugs,
Cans, cruises, pottles, cups, and mugs,
Each other greeting;
Tell me, ye boozing beldames, why
Yon monk is of your company,
And what's your meeting?

The Duke of Vendôme having by this time returned to Montreuil, and learnt the death of his valiant prisoner, not only refused, with great generosity, to take any ransom for his squire, although it would have been readily found, as his connections were affluent, but gave orders that the body of Sir Giles should be escorted to the frontiers of the English pale with all military honours. Preceded by a trumpeter, and a mounted whiffler with his horn, the procession accordingly set forward on the following morn-

ing, the corpse being borne upon a caravan, the lance, sword, and harness, disposed around it, Dudley following, and the escort of demi-lances and archers on horseback bringing up the rear. In this order they reached the English frontier, when the French returned to their own quarters, and Sir Gilbert Talbot, having dispatched a guard of honour for the purpose, the body of the deceased was accompanied back to Calais, and carried under the archway of the Boulogne gate, which he had passed through a few mornings before, mounted on his stately war-horse, cased in armour of proof, and in the confident valour of his heart, anticipating a prosperous issue to his enterprise. What added to the melancholy feelings, which the present contrast was calculated to awaken in the breasts of the townspeople, was the recollection, that of the whole body of adventurers who had so gallantly marched under his command, not a single individual was now left alive, so desperate had been the conflict, and so utter the destruction of the band. With all due solemnity, and in presence of the whole assembled garrison, the body

was committed to the earth within the church of St. Nicholas, Sir Gilbert Talbot charging himself with the office of erecting a monument, with a suitable inscription, to commemorate his various achievements, and their melancholy termination.

A truce having been concluded between the two nations shortly after this ceremony, Dudley availed himself of the interval to proceed to England, for the purpose of accomplishing the last wishes of Sir Giles, as well as of coming to some decision in a matter wherein his own future happiness and welfare were most deeply concerned. It has been already intimated that he was affianced to the daughter of Sir Eustace Poyns, an engagement, however, in which his own wishes had never been consulted. In the upper classes of life at this period, it was no uncommon thing for parents to form contracts for the intermarriage of their sons and daughters, even while they were yet infants. Dudley's father had not only named his son after his friend Sir Eustace Poyns, but had entered into a formal legal covenant for his marrying

Miss Poyns upon her attaining the age of eighteen, the portion to be advanced on either side being exactly stipulated, and even the mansion specified in which the new-married couple were to reside. In engagements of this nature it was sometimes customary, where there were two or three daughters, to give the bridegroom the choice of his bride; but no such selection had been allowed to Dudley, who was bound by name to marry Bridget, the eldest daughter of Sir Eustace Poyns, of Beckhampton Hall, in the county of Wilts.

Subsequently to this agreement which, with the due assistance of lawyers, had been signed, sealed, and interchanged, while Dudley was a child, many circumstances had occurred to render its execution on his part extremely problematical. Both his parents being now dead, he did not consider himself any longer responsible for the fulfilment of a contract to which he had never been a party: he had not seen the young lady thus chosen for him since she was an inmate of the nursery; he had a particular objection to the name of Bridget; and his recollections of

Sir Eustace were by no means such as to render him anxious to claim him as a father-in-law. His own absence in the wars, where he had been generally moving about with the army, had prevented any frequent communication between them, but as the young lady's eighteenth year was now approaching, and her father would doubtless reckon upon the completion of the contract, if he did not hear to the contrary, it was absolutely necessary to come to some immediate decision upon the subject. This he could hardly do without an interview, and he accordingly determined to avail himself of his present visit to England, for proceeding to Beckhampton Hall, and judging for himself as to the course he should pursue. If he found the young lady adapted to his taste, and likely to constitute a fitting wife for him, there was no reason why he should deviate from the arrangements made by his parents; if otherwise, he determined not to adhere to them; and in this latter alternative nothing would remain to him but the painful task of declining the intended honour, and attributing it frankly

to its real cause;—a conviction that the fulfilment of the contract would not tend to the happiness of either party, where there was a want of that reciprocal affection, on which so important a measure as marriage ought always to be founded.

Laying down these resolutions for his future conduct, he apprised Sir Eustace by letter of his intended visit to England; and taking with him the ominous helmet which he had been instructed to suspend in the church of Glastonbury, together with the letter for Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice, he commenced his journey, accompanied by Pierre, an Anglo-Gaulish servant whom he had picked up at Calais. This personage had so often alternated in his residence between the French and English pale, respectively serving masters of each country, to whom he recommended himself by his knowledge of both languages, that he was himself often at a loss of which government to consider himself a subject, or to which to give the preference; although at the bottom of his heart, France, which was the place of his nativity, possessed the greatest share

of his affections. Had not his features, accent, and gesticulation betrayed him to others to be of Gaulish origin, his light-heartedness and constitutional good-humour under every trial of temper would have afforded strong presumption of his having no English blood in his veins. He was proud, however, of calling himself a British subject when either profit or honour were attached to that title; while in everything wherein the French bore the palm, he took care to claim a share of the distinction by assuming them for his countrymen. With this attendant Dudley crossed the Channel, when he purchased a horse for himself, and another of sufficient strength to carry the huge valise, which was strapped to its back, in addition to Pierre; and thus equipped, they set forward upon their long journey to the ancient seat of the Hungerfords of The Tor. This expedition we shall for the present leave them to prosecute in the lingering manner which was then rendered inevitable by the want of fresh horses, by bad roads, worse accommodation, and difficulties and obstructions of every sort; while by that pleasant and magical conveyance which a

writer can accomplish with a single flourish of his pen, we transfer our readers to a straggling street, or rather lane of houses, in the immediate vicinity of the then thriving town of Wells in Somersetshire.

At one extremity of this irregular street stood an ancient tenement, which had for many years acquired no inconsiderable celebrity as an inn, although he who should associate it in his mind with our modern hotels, which may justly be termed the palaces of the public, would be grievously mistaken in his estimate. The building in question was a large, low, thatched house of two stories, the walls of rubble covered with yellow plaster, intersected and crossed with solid beams, or rather rough-hewn trees of old willow, oak being deemed too precious a wood when this caravansera was constructed, to be appropriated to any but churches, and monasteries, or the palaces and mansions of the great. Chimney it had none, for these were deemed luxuries even at a later period, when there were seldom more than two or three in each country town, besides those of the manor-house and the religious edifices;

the fires being made in louver holes, or laid against rere-dosses in the hall, and the smoke being considered a salutary specific, not only for hardening the timbers of the roof, but for securing the inmates against catarrhs and rheums. The windows of our rural hostelry were of wooden lattice-work, some of them having the interstices left open to the weather, or only screened with canvas; while two that probably belonged to the best apartment, were filled with thin shavings of horn instead of glass. One of the door-posts was rudely checquered with red and white squares, placed diamond-ways, to signify that the game of tables or draughts might be played within, and from this sign or symbol, as well as from the frequent resort of way-farers, for the purpose of enjoying this recreation while they sipped their ale, the house was known in those parts by the name of "The Tables."*

And well and widely known it was, for there was no Somersetshire woman, between the Men-

* These squares being generally painted so as to resemble lattice-work, the term "red-lattice phrases" came to be applied to such vulgar language as was only worthy of the alehouse.

dip Hills and Exmoor Forest, or from Filton Hay to Crewkerne Abbey in such high repute for brewing good ale, as the widow Sib Fawcett of the Tables. She was supposed to have obtained the secret of her art from a cunning monk, who, according to the scandalous report of the neighbourhood, frequented her house for other purposes than to hear her confession; although the real mystery of her superior brewage consisted simply in purchasing the ingredients herself, and preparing the beverage with her own hands, in her own house. Another circumstance which contributed to the fame of her establishment was her practice, not uncommon in those days, though now fortunately discontinued, of advancing liquor upon pledge; of keeping in fact a pawnbroker's shop, and lending ale upon the security of goods, chattels, and household stuff of all descriptions; a custom which at a period when pence were almost as rare among the peasantry as pounds are now,* must have been a prodigious accommodation to

* The wages of a field labourer in this reign, varied from a penny to three halfpence a day.

the bellies of the thirsty, although it may have probably occasioned their backs to go often bare, and their cottages to be frequently disfurnished. The weather was unusually sultry, the men were all harvesting in the fields, the women, who had been out gleaning, felt with more than ordinary keenness the necessity of moistening their palates, the statute-fair had a few days before completely exhausted their little hoards of half-pence and farthings, and this combination of circumstances occasioned a flock of female villagers to betake themselves to Sib Fawcett's, most of them provided with some pledge or deposit which they were to leave in pawn for the desiderated liquor, while some few hoped to be equally successful by the more simple expedient of the black board and the chalk-score.

The public room of the Tables was a large chamber, provided with forms and deal boards upon tressels, the bare, plastered walls were blackened with smoke, the windows were of open wooden lattice, and the clay floor was strewed with rushes, which, from an ancient col-

lection of grease, beer, bones, the rinsings of wooden trenchers, the filthiness occasioned by the dogs of the guests, and other abominations, constituted a mass little better, either in odour or appearance, than so much dung. Nor should such sluttish housewifery entail any peculiar disgrace upon Sib Fawcett, since it is recorded by no less an authority than Erasmus, that such was generally the case in the houses of the common people, to whose prevalent want of cleanliness he attributes the frequency of the plague in England. In one corner of this apartment two old crones were playing at tables beside the open casement, apparently too much occupied in their game to be even annoyed by the wrangling and jangling at the opposite extremity of the room, where Sib Fawcett sate installed behind a species of desk, on which was lying the black score-board and a lump of chalk, while beside her stood her son Dickon, (a marvellously ill-favoured youth with an ominous squint,) provided with pen, ink, and paper, and acting as accountant; an evidence of clerkship which was sufficiently rare in that

sphere of life, to justify in some degree the inordinate pride with which his mother contemplated his accomplishments. In front of this couple was collected a bevy of women, who attested the heat of the weather by their disordered dresses and red faces, not less unequivocally than by the eagerness with which they were seeking a supply of good ale to alleviate their thirst, and carry home to their houses. For this purpose each vaunted the value of her proffered pledge as she put it forward, while Sib Fawcett, with a voice and look that savoured not a little of the shrew, was equally anxious to depreciate the property, with the obvious motive of limiting her liquid advances. "Gramercy! neighbour Hogmore," she exclaimed, "why thrust ye this rosary in my face? Ods-precious! would ye sell heaven for a pottle-pot of malt liquor, and what will Father Barnabas say when ye come to confession? and call ye this string of black marbles a rosary? Beshrew me, an I have not seen a better made of bored hazle-nuts and oak-apples."

"Cogswounds, Sib!" replied the person thus

addressed; "leave your jeering and look again: is not this paternoster a large false garnet as bright as amber?—this ave-mary a real rock chrystal, or glass that is as good? this credo a true Bristol pebble, and all the rest as honest black beads as ever were prayed to, and sure ye will not boggle at filling the pottle-pot upon the pledge, even an I asked it twice over."

"With lees and vat washings, perhaps," quoth the hostess; "but not with Sib Fawcett's ale at two-pence a gallon. Howbeit, give me the baubles, the credo is a pretty pebble; so Dickon, set down a quart to Gammer Hogmore, put her tally on the rosary, and lock it up.—By my fackins, Gossip Delves, this is rare! what gear have we here, I marvel? an old iron ring to hang arras upon, or pulled, mayhap, by some restive horse out of a barn door; and upon this blacksmith's rubbish, I am to fill yonder black-jack with good ale! Marry! what sort of a gull do ye take me for?"

"For a blind buzzard, Sib, rather than a gull, for, by the rood, this ring is well worth

golden royals of any man's money, ay, or woman's either, seeing it is a true and genuine cramp-ring, touched and hallowed by King Henry on a Good Friday, after himself and the queen, and the lords and ladies of the court, had all crept to the cross; and I wish ye might be this instant drawn double by the cramp that ye might see how clean and clever it shall be driven away by a single touch of this holy relic."

"And yet, Gossip Delves, thou would'st rather trust to a pottle of Sib's malting: and mass! thou 'rt in the right, for no church-ale that e'er was brewed, was more sovereign for the quack, the pose, and the cholic; though the cramp, I grant ye, takes a stubborn grip, and will not away with anything weaker than rosa solis or aqua vitæ, which is sixteen-pence the quart. Is there sure warrant for this being a real Good Friday and King Harry cramp ring?"

"Ay, marry is there, Sib; warrant of foot, leg, and stomach, all of which have been well indebted to it. Was it o' Saint Helen's day or

at Lammas that I was last seized with cramp, as I was—"

"Slid, gossip, it matters not, for your black Jack shall be filled, so Dickon write it down, and put a label on the ring, and hang it in my cupboard, for I am apt to be queasy and qualmy o' nights, and feel sometimes a strange twitching in the calf of my left leg.—Why how now, Goody Tapps, am I to fill your skillet with strong and nappy ale for this old furred flocket and hood of Lincoln green, which has been worn and turned till the threads show themselves like so much withered hay. No, by the mass! I will not warm the stomach for gear that will leave the back cold, so go thy ways, goody, and keep thy skillet, that Gaffer Tapps may have boiled porridge for his supper. —What, neighbour Stiles, pawn thy wedding-ring to fill the twiggen-bottle! here will be a rare coil when the good man sees the white mark on thy finger! but gold 's gold: so, Dickon, fill her pottle-pitcher, and set her name to the yellow hoop, and away with it to the cupboard. What 's next, I wonder? a spinning-wheel with

flake and hackle. I' fackins! neighbour mine, not a drop upon this gear, for there 's so much more drinking than spinning o' this hot weather and gleaning time, that I might empty my vats of good beer, and fill them, an I would, with old rocks and distaffs."

"Sib, Sib, ye are in the right on't," said an old woman bustling forward; "for ye may have that in pledge which is ready money, ay, and better than money, all the world over." So saying, she took a parcel from under her arm, and unrolling a succession of wrappers, in which it was carefully folded, exhibited a little wooden box fashioned like a casket, which she opened, and displayed its contents with an air of great pride and confidence. "By cock and pie! Granny Stiles, this is rare foolery!" cried Sib; "Beshrew me an' I looked not for jewels at the least, and here we have withered camomile flowers, or dried senna, or some such flummery, fit only for the doctor's shop. An they were good hops now—"

"God pardon us all! and amen!" ejaculated Granny Stiles, crossing herself and curtsying;

"are ye turned Pagan, that ye venture thus profanely to jibe the real blossoms of the Glastonbury thorn, with this holy certificate that they are genuine?"

It was universally known in those days that when Saint Joseph of Arimathea, during his mission to England, arrived at Weary-all-hill, near Glastonbury, he struck his travelling staff into the earth, which immediately took root, and ever after put forth its leaves and blossoms on Christmas-day, being converted into a miraculous thorn. This tree, which had two distinct trunks, preserved its celebrity till the time of Queen Elizabeth, when one of them was destroyed by a Puritan, and the other met the same fate during the great rebellion. At the time of our history, its blossoms were esteemed such great curiosities and sovereign specifics, as to become an object of gain to the merchants of Bristol, who not only disposed of them to the inhabitants of their own city, but exported them to different parts of Europe. This Sib well knew, and she had therefore no sooner cast her eye upon the certificate,

than she complied with all Granny Stiles's wishes, and carefully locked up the precious deposit.

Besides these holy pawns, there were relics for rain, for avoiding the evil eye, for rooting out charlock, and all weeds in corn, with similar specifics; which, at this time, were considered the best of all property. Pledges, besides, were offered in abundance, of a more homely nature, such as grogram skirts, poledavy gowns, lockram aprons, and articles of all sorts, some of whose owners she dispatched well satisfied, sending others away thirsty and grumbling, and having a ready and a sharp word for all; until her attention was arrested by one of the old crones in the corner, who, having lost her sole penny at tables, and possessing nothing pledgable, had recourse to an expedient for satisfying her thirst, which she had often practised upon former occasions, and never without success. Lifting up her hands with well-feigned amazement, and alternately turning her eyes to heaven, and fixing them upon the ugly urchin who was writing labels,

and making entries in an account-book, she ejaculated with great fervour—"Oh the fathers! was there ever such another clever child! Oh the sweet imp! Oh the pretty dandyprat! Oh the darling, only look at him!" and then she began singing in a tremulous cracked voice—

> "By Saint Mary our lady,
> Your mammy and your daddy,
> Brought forth a goodly baby,
> My dainty Dickon dear!"

Sib Fawcett's habitually sour and shrewish features relaxed at these welcome sounds; she eyed her boy with a doating expression, which he returned with a sinister squint; and then filling a large horn by her side, and sending it to the old crone in the corner, she exclaimed with a smiling countenance—"Pledge you, Mother Trotman, pledge you. Isn't he a sweet and clerkly youth?" at this moment a younger son made a hasty irruption into the room, bawling aloud, "Mother, mother! there's the black sow got into the mash-vat!" an intimation at which Sib Fawcett started up in great wrath, and seizing a staff, while she cried out "Pin-

cher ! Pincher ! hey, dog, hey !" she hurried out at the back-door, her shrill and angry exclamations, which were presently mingled with the loud barking of a dog, continuing audible long after she was out of sight. Returning, however, at length, she informed her guests that when Father Barnabas had called at her door, last Allhallowmass eve, for a half-pottle of ale, the weather being sultry, he had placed it upon a wooden bench while he wiped his forehead with his cowl, when by evil hap, if not rather by the instigation of the devil, the black sow came up, and rubbing her back against the bench, upset it upon the good father's tender foot, and spilt the liquor: whereupon he cursed the beast, and throwing the pottle at it, hit it upon the head. From that moment she declared that the unlucky animal had done nothing but mischief; having repeatedly thrown down her children, broken a stone cruse of aqua vitæ, killed the cat, knocked the spigot out of a hogget of ale, grubbed up the fences, drunk up the milk, clambered into the malt-tub, and now made her way into the mashing-vat, so that if Father Barnabas did

not speedily take off his curse, she verily believed she should be obliged to turn the beast into bacon without further delay.

At this instant a loud, clear bass-voice chaunted from without, as if at mass-service—"Pax vo-bis-cum!" when the remaining guests starting up with pleased looks, exclaimed—"Here's Friar Frank—here's the merry friar—here's the good friar—we can swear to his noble voice, an we heard it a mile off." And immediately afterwards, in confirmation of these predictions, a monk thrust his broad, heated, good-humoured face through the casement, and looking round him with a benevolent smile, again chaunted in a tone that made the room ring—"Be-ne-di-cite!—How fare ye, gossips, housewives, ale-wives, and toping tipplers all?" he continued, and was proceeding to address them severally by name, when Sib Fawcett, with numerous curtsies, invited him to enter, which he accordingly did, apparently suffering from the heat, to which his corpulent figure rendered him peculiarly sensitive. "By the cowl of St. Francis!" quoth the

friar, "a hotter day than this we have not had since Perkyn Warbeck, the white-rose prince, as he styled himself, fled from Taunton to Bewdley Sanctuary, and his ribald soldiers, not considering what need we had of ale in such a smoking season, plundered the abbey-cellar of its store. Sib Fawcett, Sib Fawcett! there is no quenching this fever of the blood but by malt-liquor; but I come not now to claim my daily cannikin, as you term it, though I may rather call it my honorarium, for instructing my pupil Dickon in spelling and scribbling; I have silver pence in my pouch, daughter. It pleased a certain Sir Nicholas Hungerford, of the old time, (whose soul God assoil!) to direct a mass to be said for his repose after even-song on Teneber Wednesday by some godly and learned priest, which I, (heaven help the mark!) being counted to be, the mass was sung last night, the silver groat for my fee was paid me this morning, we are all parched in the palate this thirsty afternoon, and thus, by pitcher and pottle-pot, I vow to disburse the whole in ale, for the benefit of myself,

and all other such good old women and gossips as have not yet whetted whistle."

"Oh the blessed father! Heaven speed the merry monk! Blessings on Friar Frank!" ejaculated the women interested in the promised benefaction; while the others began to gather round him in the hope of sharing his bounty, though they were not included in his invitation.

"Sib Fawcett," continued the friar—"call thy nimble tapster with the threadbare eye-lids, bald brows, and sandy hair, and bid him draw spigot from the best barrel; but let him not hope to cheat us with frothy curtle-cans, nor cruses, nor tragical black jacks, nor double-dealing, hollow-hearted, false-bottomed, bombastic jugs, for I will have nothing but the honest six-hooped pot, full, and not foaming. And harkee, daughter, no long ale, nor red ale, nor ropy ale, but good and wholesome nappy of Sib Fawcett's best brewage." As the hostess bustled about with great alacrity, and an unusual pleasantness of visage, in execution of the first ready-money order she had received dur-

ing the whole afternoon, the six-hooped pot was presently placed by the friar's side, when calling around him those who had not been previously recreated, he filled a lusty horn, and presenting it to one of them, bade her empty it at a draught, and then pronounce a benediction for the founder of the mass-penny. "Mercy for the soul of Sir Nicholas Hungerford!" ejaculated the woman, smacking her lips when she had done. "Amen!" quoth the friar, and immediately crying out—"Super naculum!" the good gossip, who was accustomed to his ways, turned up the edge of the horn upon her thumb-nail to show that she had completely emptied it; when the deep voice of the friar chaunted "Pla-ce-bo!"—and the horn being replenished, was handed to another with the same ceremonies, till the circle was completed, after which he quaffed his own share with a smack of evident enjoyment. Another round exhausted the value of the silver groat, and nearly brought the friar to the end of the "Dirige," and the "De profundis," of which,

with a levity that excited no irreverent emotions in his auditors, however indecorous it might be deemed at the present æra, he had chaunted portions with great solemnity between every fresh potation.

When this ceremony had been twice performed, he tossed the silver groat to the hostess, exclaiming—"By the five joys of our Lady! never was there a better exchange, than this little dry dandyprat of modified earth, for half a score moistened palates, happy faces, and wagging tongues; and if the good Sir Nicholas, (whom Heaven assoilzie!) be the better for his mass, by the mass! so are we the better for his groat, which we have put into Sib's crucible, and melted into good ale. Ha! it leaves a pleasant flavour upon the lips! But how now, ye graceless gossips, as I will call ye, since ye are tattling and sniggering before grace has been said for your meal, will ye not hear the priest return thanks for what ye have had? Silence then, ye ungrateful topers, while I pray for future blessings of the same sort, since ye are so reckless of the past." And then with

deep melody of voice he struck up part of a merry old monkish hymn :—

" O tu qui dans oracula, scindis cotem novacula," &c.

exclaiming, when he had completed it—" My scholar Dickon shall one of these days translate the whole to you; for he has a straitforward eye to his book, although his strabismus, or squint, occasioneth him to look askew upon the world. Sib Fawcett, if thou hast a modicum of clarified honey, or a globule of sugar-candy in the pewter cup which thou keepest in the corner of the locker, I pray thee give it me, for I have trouled so lustily here, that I shall need it before I reach the singing-desk of Glastonbury, to the which I must presently pursue my journey."

At this intimation of his departure, the company crowded around him with a variety of petitions and applications, that threatened to detain him much longer in the neighbourhood than he had first intended; for the good friar, as he was justly named, was not only the general pacificator of the whole vicinity, and the umpire in every rural dispute, but constituting

himself the physician of the body, as well as the soul, was consulted in all the ailments to which the human frame is subject, from infancy to age. To qualify him for these various offices, he had ever at his side a wallet, in which, besides the psalter and mass-book, he carried divers pills, spasmadraps, cordials, and drops, for his adult patients; as well as comfits, honey-biscuits, saffron-cakes, and gingerbread-nuts, for the recreation and mastication of children: to say nothing of sundry lucky farthings and half-pence, which, being distributed as he saw occasion, were ever found to produce most salutary effects. By these specifics, to which the large crucifix appended to his rosary, and a few relics hanging from his girdle were occasionally brought in aid, he seldom failed to administer relief to his patients, many of whom found his scraps of Latin, although they did not understand them, his cheerful looks and conversation, and the melody of his fine voice, as he chaunted a psalm or a hymn, at least as sovereign remedies, as any of those that were contained in his wallet. Nor was he less successful as a ghostly

comforter; for as it was one of his benevolent maxims, that the poorer orders who generally bear so much suffering, privation, and sorrow, in this world, should at least be encouraged to expect a better fate in the next, he took pains to instil, into those whom he visited as a confessor, such consolatory hopes and assurances, as would smooth the bed of death, if they did not, as was not unfrequently the case, materially contribute to the restoration of health.

Such being the multiplicity of his avocations, it will be no subject of wonder that the good women, who had been so fortunate as to get him in their neighbourhood, were in no hurry to let him depart. Goody Tapps appealed to him to visit with the wrath of the church a foul-mouthed neighbour who had spoken scandal concerning her, of which she was proceeding to give a very angry and diffuse account, when the friar interrupting her, exclaimed,—"Tell the shrew, if she mend not her manners, she shall sit in the ducking-stool, *quia non est bonæ conversationis, neque bonæ gubernationis.*"

"'There, my mistresses, there!" cried Goody Tapps, striking her right fist upon the palm of her left hand—"said I not so? By my fackins! I would call her every one of those names, an I could but recollect them."

Neighbour Stiles implored him to visit her sick son, if it were only to sing a psalm to him; declaring that the boy had an ear for music, and had talked of nothing else since he had heard the good father play upon the organ.

"Of a truth," said the friar, "I do value myself for my skill in the instrument, (being acquired,) more than for my voice, which is but a natural gift; although in my younger days of vanity I remember to have composed my own epitaph, which ran partly thus:—

'Millibus in mille
Cantor fuit optimus ille,
Præter et hæc ista,
Fuit optimus orgaquenista.'

But I am grown too old now to vaunt of my poor powers, either vocal or manual, although I may the sooner need an epitaph. Howbeit, the

lad shall be visited, and I will sing him out of his sick bed, as if he had been bitten by a tarantula; and if he has such a good ear as you aver, and a voice thereunto, I may perchance pull him by his auricle to Glastonbury, and assign him a place in the quire."

"Ah! good friar Frank," quoth another of the gossips—"there's my poor daughter Cicely has been possessed and bewitched these three days, and the devil that's in her won't let her pass the cross in the market-place, but ever she turns up the lane in which young Wat Staples, the woolcomber, sits singing at his work; and if I thought your good prayers might unbewitch her—"

"If!" interrupted the friar—"know ye not that I have a special bull for this purpose, sub plumbo of the Pope?" Let her be at home on the morrow after St. Simon and St. Jude, and I will not fail to call and exorcise the spirit with bell, book, and candle, and ejaculations of Kyrie Eleison, and Christe Eleison,—and Sancte, sancte, sancte, Domine deus Sabaoth!"

Such was the respect of the common people

for the learning of those who understood Latin, and their reverence for the language itself, which was consecrated to all the offices of religion, that they were apt to think no extraordinary change or cure of any sort could be effected without its employment, and they felt a proportionate confidence in the very sound of the words, even where they did not understand their import. It was not, therefore, from any irreverent levity, nor for any purpose of delusion, that Friar Frank generally introduced quotations of this nature, but that he might avail himself of the popular weakness to inspire a confidence, which was often more efficacious than the measures, whatever they might be, which he subsequently thought proper to adopt; although from long habit he sometimes continued the practice almost unconsciously. In the present instance, the good woman, whose daughter was bewitched, departed in high spirits, in the full assurance of a perfect cure for her child, as soon as the morrow of St. Simon and St. Jude should arrive.

The friar had entered minutes of all these

applications in a table-book which he had again deposited in his comprehensive wallet, and was about to take his departure, when, seeming suddenly to recollect himself, he exclaimed—"By St. Joseph of Arimathea! I had almost forgotten, good Sib, that though we have squared accounts for the silver groat, I have not quaffed my daily cannikin, or honorarium, for my little scholar yonder; and as it would not like me that so toward a lad should go backward in his learning, I will for his sake discuss my customary modicum of malt-liquor. Now tell me, good Sib," he continued, with a look of great solemnity—"dost thou truly and conscientiously believe that bonum additum bono facit aliquid melius?"

"Ay, marry and amen, that do I," replied the hostess—"and am ready to swear it upon the book if you say it is sooth." "Why then, good Sib," resumed the friar—"let this ale be the same as the last, for it hath left a savoury memory upon my lips. Didst thou not see, my good hostess"—he continued when the liquor was brought him—"a conjuror at the

late fair who rendered things invisible by sleight of hand? Now shalt thou see how easily is the same accomplished by sleight of mouth."—So saying, he drank it off at a draught, girded his belt and wallet, gathered up his gown, and was about to take his departure, when the room suddenly rang to the loud beating of a heavy staff against the door, and the clamour of some one calling without, in an impatient voice—"What ho, house! house! open door, ye deaf and boozing bumpkins!"

Uncourteous as were the terms of this mandate, it was immediately obeyed by Sib Fawcett, when a heated and unbonneted man presented himself, whose figure and face, not less than his imperious manner, gave intimation of some personage of distinction, although the quality of his habiliments was rendered utterly undistinguishable by a casing of mud and clay, which almost enveloped him from top to toe.

## CHAPTER IV.

'Tis an enchanted cave, by rare
Unseen musicians of the air,
Or syrens haunted ;—
This is no strain from lips of clay,
But some mellifluous roundelay,
By spirits chaunted.

DUDLEY, accompanied as we have already stated by Pierre, bearing a whole wardrobe behind him in a huge valise, had safely travelled across the country in the direction of Somersetshire, until he found himself in the vicinity of the Mendip hills, when remembering to have heard from one of his kinsmen of the Tor, most marvellous accounts of a formidable cavern which they contained, known by the name of Wokey-Hole, and finding that it would not occasion a very material deviation from his road, he

determined to take the present opportunity of visiting it. For this purpose he turned his horse's head towards the lofty range, consisting of numerous heights, the sloping sides of which, gradually shelving down to a point, approached and receded in a most picturesque manner; disclosing the water in the valley between them, which, being partially or totally intersected by the bases of the hills, as they shot athwart it, one behind another, gave it the appearance of a succession of little lakes. In this quarter the declivities were gentle and verdant, while the recently shorn sheep, being either gathered in white clusters in the valley, or dotted about upon the slopes, imparted to the whole a quiet, pastoral, and pleasing air. No sooner, however, had he gained the heights, and pursued the ridge in another direction, than the character of the scenery became totally altered; the whole prospect before him was black, desolate, and rugged; the summits of the hills being covered with large dark-looking knolls, and their sides torn open by enormous fissures, which appearing to have been produced by some convulsion

of nature, and occasionally assuming the most fantastic forms, bore altogether an appearance at once whimsical and terrific. One of the chasms that he encountered extended nearly a mile in length, displaying to the eye a scene truly awful and sublime. In many places its rugged walls rose more than four hundred feet in perpendicular height, and at others fell into obliquities of double that elevation, whose sides disclosed the yawning mouths of caverns, which had acquired the reputation in the neighbourhood of being so many entrances to the infernal regions. Above these portentous apertures hung rocks of immense magnitude, blackening by their shade the tremendous gulf below, into which they appeared about to fall, and filling the mind of the spectator with a mixed sentiment of horror and admiration.

Accustomed from his boyhood to military expeditions into unknown districts, where he had not only the localities to conquer, but to guard against ambushes, and surprises of all sorts, Dudley piqued himself not a little upon his land-pilotage, and the skill with which he could

reach any given point, the bearings of which had been once made known to him. Instigated by this vanity he had contented himself with ascertaining the direction of Wokey-Hole, and declined taking a guide, although he had been repeatedly assured that he was little likely to succeed without one. His knowledge of the quarter in which the object of his visit was situated availed him little, when, so far from his discovering a single practical road that led to it, he found himself repeatedly in situations of the most imminent peril, by coming unexpectedly to some impassable glen of swamp and rock, or riding to the very edge of a precipice, down which he could not have been precipitated without instant destruction. In such a dangerous tract there was no advancing at beyond a foot-pace, to which, accordingly, their progress had been for some time limited; and in this slow manner they climbed up one height and down another; winding, turning, and returning, till their beasts began to get fatigued; and Dudley, repeatedly baffled and disappointed in the confident predictions, with which he commenced

every new route, not only lost at length all knowledge of the points of the compass, but, what was much worse, began to lose his temper.

To a man that is in the smallest degree irritable, and who thinks he has superabundant excuse for being out of humour, there are few things more provoking than the imperturbable cheerfulness of a companion, who has precisely the same cause as himself for being splenetic and sulky.

In such a case, even his silent philosophy is deemed a reproach, but if his gaiety becomes audible, it is a personal affront; and it was precisely in this latter predicament, that Dudley found himself placed with regard to Pierre. Availing himself of the familiarity between master and servant, which is allowed by the customs of France, the latter, whose countenance had been for some time evidently getting saturated with suppressed laughter at their repeated failures, had contented himself with singing whenever they commenced a new route—

" Hanneton ! vole, vole, vole !
Hanneton ! vole, vole, vole ! "

which old rural ditty he went through with great animation, until, after many windings, and as many assurances that they had at last got into the right tract, they unexpectedly came round to the very spot from which they had taken their last departure. At this unexpected consummation, the risibility which he had been so long accumulating, exploded at once in a peal that made the welkin resound; and Dudley, mortified at the man's superior good-humour, though he chose to attribute his own anger to the manifest want of respect in his servant, rebuked him for his impertinence in no very measured terms.

" *Pardi, monsieur,*" exclaimed Pierre, gathering up his risible muscles, which had been stretched to their full dimension—" we always laugh at these things in France."

" Then you are fools for your pains," said Dudley, sternly—" surely our present predicament suggests nothing to laugh at."

" *Dame ! monsieur—c'est pourquoi:* any sim-

pleton may snigger when there is a good cause; *mais rire quand on est au desespoir*, ha, ha! is to make fortune look like a fool, and not ourselves."

"Perhaps so," said Dudley, relaxing a little from his wrath, "and there might be merit in it, if it proceeded from philosophy, but where it originates in mere constitutional gaiety—"

"We are always gay, *nous autres*," interrupted Pierre,—"*Morgué, Pierrot, morgué!*"

"Or where it proceeds from a stupid insensibility," continued Dudley.

"*Sans doute*—there are such people among the French," Pierre replied with a contemptuous look, and a shrug that was meant to disclaim all affinity with them, although it did but the more incontestably establish his Gaulish origin.

"We must make another attempt to extricate ourselves," said Dudley, striking spurs into his beast—"or at least to encounter some living being; for we may chance otherwise to pass the night here, and be fain to gnaw our spur-leathers for dinner."

"*A la bonne heure—allons!*" exclaimed Pierre,

following his master, and commencing a new song, which had apparently suggested itself to him by its jingling to the word *gay*.

"Morgué, Pierrot, morgué, je suis en grand souci,
Catin me dit que j'aime tout à boire,
Qu'elle a bien de la peine à croire,
Que je puisse l'aimer aussi."

The equanimity of Dudley's temper was by no means sufficiently re-established to allow him to enjoy, or even to tolerate this ditty, which he had more than once endeavoured to suppress by an authoritative exclamation of "silence!" Pierre, however, had only lowered his tone, without discontinuing the song, which seemed to have such a charm in dispelling all unpleasant thoughts or associations, that he gazed upon the wild and savage scenery around him with as much complacency, as if he had been riding up to the door of the best inn, and was sure of the best cheer, that England could afford. When Dudley, however, again stopped his horse, on their arriving at the foot of a steep and apparently inaccessible hill, his polite attendant would not refuse to participate in his

evident vexation, but exclaiming—"Peste! we have no such miserable country as this in France," attempted for a few seconds to look as unhappy as possible; but immediately after, relapsing as it were into himself, he burst out into a new song—"*Chantons l'amour chantons!*" which he delivered with an energy that seemed intended to bid defiance to fate.

Annoyed as he already was at being placed by his own overweening confidence in a dilemma that began to threaten very unpleasant consequences, Dudley felt more than ever indignant at the unseasonable and disrespectful merriment of his companion, and was half-disposed to vent some portion of his spleen by the instant exercise of his horsewhip upon the shoulders of his vocal varlet, when he was astonished at hearing loud cries and wild peals of laughter, seeming to proceed from a considerable body of men, and sounding from the summit of the hill immediately before him. To this point he instantly turned his eyes, but no human being, nor moveing object of any sort could he discover, and, as a sudden silence had succeeded to the first rude

burst of merriment, he began to recal the legend he had heard about the witch of Wokey Hole, and her occasional visits to the Mendip hills, to join in the fearful orgies, conjurations, and revelries of her sister hags, at their great annual assemblage. Pierre, too, crossed himself devoutly upon the forehead and breast, and would have repeated the whole of his paternoster, but that he unconsciously broke off in the middle into one of his rural ballads—"*Colin mangeant des artichaux.*"

A second loud shout of mingled cries and laughter, echoing still more distinctly from the summit of the hill, determined Dudley to climb its rugged sides, and endeavour to discover whence they proceeded. After two or three vain attempts to find any practicable ascent for his horse, he dismounted; Pierre did the same; and having tied their jaded animals to some bushes, they began to clamber up the precipitous sides, which were not only broken into a thousand inequalities, but crossed by deep and dangerous fissures, and entangled with stunted furze. With no little toil and risk they at

length approached the top, the same wild uproar continuing and getting louder as they advanced, until at length, upon their gaining the crest of the rocky height, a scene developed itself which they were not less astonished to discover, than utterly at a loss to comprehend its meaning.

Before them they beheld an abrupt and deep incavation, whose rocky and rugged sides, apparently blackened by the action of fire, might have been well imagined to form the crater of a volcano, but that upon a level plain at the bottom of the hollow were seen a concourse of wild-looking men, attired in dark dirty garments, and forming a large circle round a low wooden hut in the centre of the place. Anxious as Dudley was to obtain some information that might extricate him from his present predicament, he so little liked the ferocious looks of the band, that he sate down behind a piece of rock, and desired Pierre once more to cease his song, as he was determined to watch the proceedings of this banditti-like party, before he ventured to claim their assistance. The little wooden hut was

surrounded with dry fern, furze, and other combustibles; a man, who appeared to be the leader of the crew, was seen to wave a lighted torch over his head; and Dudley wondered what sort of sacrifice was about to signalize these rites, which seemed to be as savage as the region in which they were celebrated. If such was the unfavourable opinion he had formed from a mere sight of the preparations, the purpose of these rustic fanatics, (for such he suspected them to be,) assumed a darker and atrocious character when he marked their further proceedings. Their chief ministrant had no sooner set fire to the pile, than the whole party sent forth a yell, which sounded the more horrible and incomprehensible, from its being mixed with discordant laughter; while in the intervals of the uproar, he thought he could distinguish the noise of blows that seemed to be given with great violence by some one imprisoned within the wooden hut; sounds which were received by the surrounding party with increased shouts of merriment.

Is it possible, thought Dudley to himself, that these villanous boors are ignorant and

brutal enough to revive the horrid rites of the ancient Druids; can they be so hardened as not only to offer up human sacrifices, but to contemplate the sufferings of their victims with the heartless levity of demons? Such was his indignation at the very thought, that he was balancing the propriety of interfering to prevent the consummation of their diabolical purpose, which could not now be much longer delayed, as the whole circle of combustibles was kindled and burning with much fury, when to his horror and amazement the side of the little hut was beaten down with a loud crash, and out burst a man, habited like the rest of the party, who dashed through the surrounding flames, and ran with the wild speed of terror up the rugged sides of the glen. A loud and hideous yell resounded from the whole party, as he broke from his wooden prison; and, although they showed no disposition to pursue him, Dudley was still in doubt whether their intended victim would be able to make his escape, and ascend the height. He had, however, not only chosen a part that was more

practicable than elsewhere, but leaping over pits and fissures, and vaulting from crag to crag, with the agility of a mountain-goat, had presently gained the summit, and approached the rock, from behind which the travellers had been watching his progress with the deepest interest and amazement. Their astonishment, however, as they marked his singed beard and hair, and blackened clothes, which imparted to his naturally gaunt and ferocious features a character scarcely human, was almost equalled by that of the man at encountering two well-dressed travellers in that wild and unfrequented district.

"Fear nothing," said Dudley as he drew his sword—"we are friends and Christians who will defend you at peril of life against yonder crew of miscreants and assassins. We have horses under the hill, which may help you to escape should the villains pursue you, provided you can discover any road or practicable tract, which we ourselves have been in vain seeking for some hours past." In a rustic dialect that rendered him at times scarcely intelligible, the

object thus addressed, proceeded to state, in answer to Dudley's inquiries, that he was now in no apprehension of pursuit, that the hill upon which they were standing was a celebrated lead-mine, the deep and rugged excavation at the top having been produced by extracting the ore which was every where interspersed with the rock; and that the party from whom he had just escaped were miners, or grovers, as they called themselves, who, when they left their work at night, deposited their tools in the little wooden hut. By a rude law established among themselves, they claim the right of enclosing any person convicted of stealing these implements, or any portion of them, in the little tenement, which they surround with combustibles, and setting fire to them, give the criminal the chance of breaking out of his prison, forcing his way through the flames to the ridge of the excavation, and so making his escape, though he is never allowed to resume work in that mine. Through this fiery ordeal, which is called the Burning of the Hill, it appeared that the narrator had just passed, loudly protesting

his innocence to his present auditors, and adducing his escape from any material injury as an irrefragable confirmation of his assertions, although his furtive physiognomy seemed strongly to corroborate the charge.

Whatever might be his private opinion of the man's guilt, Dudley expressed his indignation at this lawless and barbarous mode of punishment; while Pierre, determined not to acknowledge the perpetrators of such an outrage for his countrymen, exclaimed with a very significant shrug—"*Morbleu!* we have no such savages in France."

Being invited to become their guide, for which he was promised a suitable recompence, their new acquaintance was now asked whether they were at any great distance from the celebrated cavern of Wokey Hole, in reply to which he informed them that its entrance was at a very little distance, and that he was perfectly competent to direct them, as he was well acquainted with all its passages, vaults, and recesses.

"I thought I could not be much out in my

reckoning," cried Dudley, "and that after all we were in the right direction."

"*Morbleu!*" exclaimed Pierre, "Monsieur was of the same opinion when we were going the other way. *Mais c'est égal. Hanneton! vole, vole, vole!*" and so saying, he scudded down the hill to get ready the horses, which they presently remounted, and being enabled by their present guide to discover that which they had so long sought in vain—a practicable, though somewhat rugged, bridle-road, they were not long in reaching the object of their expedition. On their approach to the entrance of the cavern, the surface of the country continuing to be broken up into wild and irregular masses, preserved the same character of magnificence and grandeur; while the greater prevalence of verdure, and the rich tints of varicoloured mosses and heaths, with which the crags were mantled, softened the scenery to the eye, and seemed to throw an expression of beauty over its bold and rugged features. In the perpendicular side of the hill before them, was an oval cove or recess of considerable ex-

tent, beneath which they beheld a natural arch, thirty feet high, and forty broad, whence a clear rapid stream leaping forth, burst away impetuously over a rocky channel, fringed with a variety of aquatic plants and mosses. Climbing up a craggy terrace, under the direction of their guide, they passed through the narrow mouth of the cavern, and presently found themselves in a spacious vault, the whole roof and sides of which were encrusted with sparry concretions of whimsical shapes. Hence they descended by a narrow passage to another vault of smaller dimensions, from which a low craggy and irregular aperture conducted them to a spacious area, the extent of which the light of the torch, with which the guide had provided himself, did not enable them to determine, although they could ascertain that the roof was of a cylindrical form. This, the man informed them, had been the principal residence of the Witch of Wokey, whose various utensils and animals, becoming petrified by the lapse of time, and the perpetual dropping of water, had been incorporated, as it were, with the cavern, and were most distinct-

ly identified with sundry figures, projecting from the roof and sides, or adhering to the floor. On the authority of this rural cicerone, they learnt, that during the reign of the witch-hag, all the herbs around the cave were blighted, and all the flocks in the neighbourhood blistered and diseased; that she had nine wicked familiars, who always did her bidding by day, and kennelled at her side by night, until at last one of the former abbots of Glastonbury came in procession to the cave, chanted a paternoster in the midst of it, and having converted the stream into holy water, by throwing his cross into it, and blessing it, took some of it in his hand, sprinkled the nine elves, one after another, and turned them all into stone; in support of which assertion, he pointed them out upon the floor, and counted over the rocky lumps to prove that there could be no mistake as to the number. With stealing footsteps, a whispering voice, and a look of deep awe not unmixed with terror, he even led them to an alabaster-like mass, which he maintained to have once been the witch herself, who, having inadvertently fallen asleep in

her arm-chair, had been sprinkled with the holy water, and petrified before she could again open her eyes; although by the low tone of his voice he seemed to think it possible that she might be still only in a deep slumber, from which any irreverent clamour might peradventure awaken her.*

The singular beauty and curious construction of this cavern reconciled Pierre once more to the notion of his being an English subject, and he exclaimed with great emphasis—"*Pardi!* they have no such wonders in France." Dudley, who seemed, in the novelty of the scene, to find some consolation for the disappointment and fatigue he had experienced in reaching it, desired the guide to explore the utmost limits of this subterraneous hall, which he accordingly proceeded to do, although by his manner he appeared to be still haunted with some misgivings about the witch, as he groped his way into the darker penetralia of her temple. Ad-

* A ballad upon this subject will be found in the first vol. of Percy's "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry," 328.

vancing cautiously to the extremity of the vault in one direction, he pointed to the silent limpid stream of Wokey water, which here, meeting with the vaulted rock, intercepted the passage, and informed them that this spot was called the witch's bath, beyond which there was no possibility of proceeding. As if, however, to give an immediate refutation to this assertion, a loud splashing was suddenly heard from within, and they could dimly perceive some white object swimming rapidly towards them, from beneath the low dark arch formed by the rock as it impended over the water, though nothing could be distinctly recognized but two large bright eyes, which seemed to absorb all the light that penetrated the gloomy recess.—Coupling probably this doubtful apparition with some tradition or tale of terror attached to the cave, the guide had no sooner caught a glimpse of it, than he shouted out in a voice of terror—"The witch! the witch!" and ran with all speed towards the passage by which they had entered, expecting, perhaps, that his companions would follow. So sudden, however, had been his

flight, and so much had Dudley been startled by the indistinct object floundering in the water, that, in his momentary irresolution how to act, the man had nearly gained the farther extremity of the vault, before he thought of pursuing him to seize the light, and prevent their being left in total darkness. When at length he started after him for this purpose, he had scarcely taken twenty steps, before he struck against one of the projecting incrustations of the floor, and was thrown down with considerable violence, catching one glimpse of the disappearing torch as it flashed upon the waters, when the whole place became instantly involved in an impenetrable obscurity. He was constitutionally brave, and had acquired besides that habitual courage which arises from a soldierly familiarity with danger in all its customary forms; but he was by no means so free from those superstitious impressions, which at that time pervaded all classes of society, as to encounter supernatural antagonists with unshaken nerves, or to possess his usual intrepidity when he found himself buried alive, as it were, in a

black vault, and exposed to the malignity of the witch; who was perhaps at that moment swimming down the now invisible stream to assault him. Fortunately for his reputation for valour, his wrath against the runaway guide, and the pain of a contusion he had received in falling, occasioned his passion to overmaster his apprehensions, and a volley of abusive epithets to supersede all expression of alarm at being placed in so alarming a predicament.

Pierre, who was in momentary expectation that the witch would land from the water and leap upon his back, had no wish whatever to conceal his terrors; but stood crossing himself and praying in great tribulation, until the sound of his master's angry voice guided him to the spot where he was; when, in the joy of rejoining him, he betook himself to his usual consolation, shouting out with hearty good-will,—

"Colin mangeant des artichaux,
Dit à sa femme, ma mignonne,
Goutes en, ils sont tout nouveaux,
Par ma foi l'espece en est bonne."

As soon as silence could be obtained, Dudley

desired him to listen, that they might learn whether any thing were moving in the vault; but they could hear no sound to break the deep silence, but the agitated inspirations of Pierre, who pretended he had sung himself out of breath, and the guggling of the invisible water pursuing its rapid course through the darkness. As the silence continued, their confidence revived, when a new subject of apprehension presented itself to Dudley's mind. He began to think that the villain of a guide had purposely decoyed them to this extremity of the cavern, where he had seized a pretext for abandoning them, that he might possess himself of their horses, and the large valise, containing the rich wardrobe which he had collected with so much care and cost in France. This supposition was rendered more than probable, when he combined the fellow's roguish physiognomy with the punishment he had already endured for imputed theft; and, in the indignation excited by the thought of being thus duped, and exposed to such an irreparable loss, he determined to lose no time in exploring his way

out of the cave, that he might commence an immediate pursuit. Taking a firm hold, therefore, of Pierre's hand, for their mutual security in case either of them should fall into the water, they cautiously followed the sound of the stream, the waves of which they remembered to have noticed when they first entered the vault.

In this manner, occasionally stumbling over the fragments of rock, with which the floor was strewed, and at other times in imminent peril of being precipitated into the water, they groped their way to the opposite extremity of the vault, without however discovering, although they made repeated efforts for the purpose, the passage by which they were to deliver themselves. By exploring the rock all round, Dudley made sure of succeeding; and they accordingly commenced this enterprize, with the alacrity of renewed hope; but when, after surmounting a variety of difficulties and dangers, they again heard the water, and had reason to believe that they had wandered back to the witch's bath, their confidence abated, and a thousand vague and undefined apprehensions began to visit their

desponding minds, as they both stood in a temporary irresolution as to what further attempts they should make for their extrication. To add to their distress, they were fasting after a long and fatiguing journey; and the sensations of hunger, which they already began to experience, by no means reconciled them to the anticipation of an indefinite abstinence, which, unless some new visitant came to disinter them, might ultimately terminate in starvation. After a short consultation together, in which, however, Pierre stated his inability to suggest any thing for their relief, because, as he said, "*Pardi!* we have no such villanous places in France," Dudley declared that they must not relax their efforts, while they had strength to make them; and accordingly proposed that they should recommence their search for the entrance-passage, with a firm resolution to continue it until they succeeded. For this purpose they again grasped one another's hands, and were about to start afresh, when, with an astonishment that rivetted them to the spot where they stood, they heard a voice of

great sweetness, sounding from above them, warble the following

SONG.

Echo, songstress of the air,
All excelling,
Tell me, viewless wanderer, where
Is thy dwelling?
O rare! 'tis here, 'tis there;
Hark! hark! hark!

Sweet! to hear a human tongue,
And yet be lonely,
Nor fear the lurking Syren sung
To harm us only.
O rare! 'tis here, 'tis there;
Hark! hark! hark!

Thine is a voice that never did
Deceive or flatter,
That cheers our gloom, yet when we bid
Will cease to chatter.
O rare! 'tis here, 'tis there;
Hark! hark! hark!

Absent presence! other self!
Mine offspring rather,
How durst thou, little playful elf,
Thus mock thy father?
O rare! 'tis here, 'tis there;
Hark! hark! hark!

Nay, gentle Echo, do not flee!
Be not offended,
But let my solitude by thee
Be still attended!
O rare! 'tis here, 'tis there;
Hark! hark! hark!

Whatever might have been Dudley's first agitated emotions, as a thought flitted across his mind, that the witch, or some other supernatural tenant of the cave, might have taken her more appropriate station in the air, and was serenading them from the roof of the vault, there was something so bland, gentle, and soothing in the tones of the voice, that, when its melody ceased, he felt perfectly assured it had proceeded from some good and benignant being. As he stood in silent expectation that the dulcet strain might be resumed, he rapidly revolved in his mind all the tales he had ever read of syren, nymph, or genius, doubtful to which class he should appropriate this invisible vocalist; for he could hardly admit the possibility that a daughter of earth could find her way to any inner chamber of those subterranean abodes, or be disposed to make such dreary vaults echo to her solitary

song. As to Pierre, he found such delight in encountering a singer of any sort, and especially so sweet a one as the present, that, although he firmly believed the sounds to proceed from the real witch of Wokey, whom they had either disturbed in the bath, or awakened from the sparry arm-chair in which they had seen her immovably petrified, he could not help whispering to his master—"*Morbleu!* monsieur, they have no such sweet-voiced witches in France."

The song not being renewed, Dudley determined to apprise the vocalist of their presence, and to solicit assistance for their deliverance; with which object he shouted aloud, but the hollow echoes of his voice, reverberating faintly from the adjoining vaults through which they had passed, was the sole reply to his summons. Again he repeated the cry, in which Pierre now joined him; but the sound died gradually away, and a silence, rendered more deep and solemn by this momentary interruption of its reign, once more brooded over the impervious darkness of the vault.

"This songstress, whoever she may be," ex-

claimed Dudley, "is scarcely as benevolent as her melodious notes would lead us to imagine; for, though she cannot have escaped beyond the reach of our voices, she seems little disposed to give us aid. Wherefore, good Pierre, we must e'en trust to our own exertions, and proceed without further delay to execute the purpose which her ditty interrupted." To this invitation Pierre replied by singing, "*Allerte! allerte! allerte! disoit père Gregoire;*" and they set out upon a new attempt at exploring their way out, not less disappointed than indignant that their hopes should thus have been raised, apparently for no other purpose than that of mocking their distress.

They had not advanced many steps, when they again stopped, upon Pierre's declaring that he saw a faint light strike against the roof of the vault, although it had again disappeared. In a few seconds afterwards, Dudley himself beheld it playing upon the lofty arch with the dim and uncertain motion of a will-o'-the-wisp; but as it presently grew stronger, and fixed itself against the side of the vault, they both cried

out for help, and had the pleasure of perceiving that the light appeared to be steadily approaching. They were now enabled to discover an opening in the side of the vault, at some height from the ground, through which the rays streamed; and as they watched the aperture with the intense interest of men whose preservation depended on the approaching succour, they were at length delighted by the sight of a torch, the bearer of which, gradually rising up from a descent on the other side, till he stood in the centre of the elevated opening, disclosed to them the figure of a youth, habited in a rich jerkin and tunic, and wearing his fair hair in long curls down to his shoulders.

"Help, my good friend, help!" cried Dudley, "for we have been deserted by our villain of a guide, who has borne away our torch, and left us in danger of perishing, since we cannot discover any exit from this infernal cavern."

"Wait, wait!" replied the youth, with an eager voice and benevolent look: and, immediately running down the declivity on the other side, suddenly disappeared, leaving a faint light

glimmering upon the roof from his receding torch, which slowly faded away until they again found themselves in total darkness and profound silence. An interval of most painful suspense succeeded, for each minute seemed a period that might involve their joint lives in its slow and lengthened lapse. One after another passed heavily on; the stranger came not again; and as they began to be tormented with misgivings of their being deserted and left to perish, their feelings can only be compared to those of the shipwrecked crew, who, after seeing the life-boat put off to their rescue, and come within hail, are condemned to the misery of finding that she cannot approach nearer, and with despairing hearts see her tack about, and abandon them to their fate. This desponding thought was not, however, of long duration. The roof, upon which they kept their eyes steadily fixed, shortly became irradiated with a faint gleam of the returning torch, which, approaching them with more rapidity than before, soon rejoiced their hearts by presenting to their observation the figure of the youth. He stood for a moment in

the aperture until he had lighted another torch, which he had gone to procure, when holding it against the side of the vault, and letting it slide down so that it reached them unextinguished, he exclaimed in a sweet voice, which immediately identified him with the mysterious vocalist —" you will find the entrance to the passage behind the crag by the water-side. Lose no time in making your escape, and God give you well to fare!"—At these words he bowed his head, and again hurrying down the inner declivity, was out of sight in an instant.

The parties whom he had thus essentially served needed no recommendation to be prompt in delivering themselves from the cavern. On approaching the point indicated, they found that on their previous search they had missed the passage in their fear of the water, a circumstance which might have recurred twenty times had they explored it in the dark, although they now discovered it without the smallest difficulty. Anxiety to be finally delivered from these ominous vaults, and the hope of recovering his valise, gave so much alertness to Dud-

ley's motions, that they quickly regained the mouth of the cavern, and stood once more upon the rocky terrace, where Pierre signalized his escape, and his glad return to the sunshine, by completing the ballad of Colin and his artichokes, and shouting aloud,

" La Belle, avec un doux maintien,
Lui dit, mange les, toi que mon cœur aime,
Car ils me feront plus de bien,
Que si je les mangeois moi-même."

Dudley, while he was thus occupied, had run to the place where the horses had been left, and to his great surprise, and still greater satisfaction, found them quietly nibbling the grass, the valise remaining unplundered, and not a soul appearing to have visited the spot. On inquiring of an old cripple stationed near the approach to the cavern, who had supplied them with the torch, he declared that he had seen their rustic guide run away with great speed some time before, and concluded that his company had taken their departure in some other direction. From this statement, Dudley was induced to believe, that the fugitive was in reality as much

terrified as he had appeared to be, and that he had unjustly charged him with thievish propensities in the present instance, however merited might have been the punishment inflicted upon him at the " burning of the hill."

Our traveller had already suffered too much from the want of a guide to have any wish for prosecuting his journey without one, but the cripple was neither competent nor willing to accompany them, nor could any one be found, according to his statement, without going to the village of Wokey, which was a mile and a half distant. When he found, however, that they were bound to Wells, he declared that no conductor was necessary, as they would at a little distance fall into a regular road, which they could not possibly miss, and which would lead them direct to the town. Upon these assurances, coupled with minute directions for finding the road in question, they resolved to proceed unaccompanied. Having therefore refreshed their horses, and stimulated rather than appeased their own appetites by exhausting the cripple's little stock of sun-burnt saffron cakes,

they set forward, and falling shortly into the track which had been promised them, they proceeded with the comfortable conviction of being right in their course, as well as of having sure and safe footing for their horses.

Relieved from all apprehension upon these points, their thoughts had leisure to recur to the adventure they had experienced in Wokey Hole, of the mystery of which, they offered various solutions, but all equally unsatisfactory. Pierre was most at a loss to account for the object they had seen floundering in the water: it was not likely that the youth would thus amuse himself only to terrify them; and besides, however dimly they had seen the figure, it was certainly white; whereas the youth wore dark garments, which exhibited no appearance of having been recently wetted:—from all which premises he very clearly deduced that it must have been neither more nor less than the witch herself, whose malignant spells they might think themselves doubly fortunate to have escaped. Dudley puzzled himself in vain conjectures, as to the youth to whom they were in-

debted for their deliverance. Who was he?—how did he gain that inner chamber?—what motive could he have for visiting it, apparently for lengthened periods, since he was provided with a supply of torches? These were questions much easier suggested than answered, as nothing whatever had transpired that could assist in solving the difficulty. Short as was the glimpse obtained of him, he had observed that his clothes betokened a person of condition, although his pale and delicate complexion, and the melancholy, yet benignant, expression of his features did not indicate their possessor to be gifted with either health or happiness.

These reflections were interrupted by Pierre's exclaiming—"Morbleu! we have no such cowardly runaways in France as that rogue of a guide."

"You forget the Battle of the Spurs," said Dudley, sarcastically.

"Eh, dame!" replied Pierre, who by changing his nominative pronouns seemed to imagine that he changed his country—"they had our English archers to run away from, who are

somewhat more formidable than an old water-witch. *Mais, écoutez donc, Monsieur,*" he continued, anxious to have some set-off for the Battle of the Spurs;—"you were not in Calais when Culpepper, the under-marshal, brought in six score French prisoners, one of whom was bought by an English cooper, who receiving a hundred crowns for his ransom, agreed to see him beyond the causeway on his way back to Boulogne. *Pardi, Monsieur!* no sooner were they arrived there, than my countryman, seeing no succour was nigh, took the cooper prisoner, carried him to Boulogne, and made him pay two hundred crowns to be ransomed.—Ha, ha—*Voilà du courage—voilà de la finesse. Allerte! Allerte! Allerte! disoit père Gregoire.*"

Dudley felt no disposition to interrupt this song, or the half dozen that succeeded it, till they began to descend from the range of the Mendip hills, and beheld before them the straggling city of Wells, when, observing that the road made a considerable detour, and being anxious on account of the fatigue

of their horses to shorten the distance as much as possible, he proposed that they should cut across the sloping fields and meadows that shelved down to the town, so as to reach it by the most direct course. As there were no enclosures to impede their progress, Pierre thought they could not do better; and they accordingly quitted the track and struck across the grass. It would have been fortunate had it ever occurred to Dudley, that there might have been good reason for turning the road, which had, in fact, been rendered inevitable, because the water that filtered from the hills, arrested by an extensive stratum of clay, had formed a succession of dangerous bogs and quagmires, whose surface, being thinly covered with grass and weeds, prevented their being distinguished from the more solid turf. Into one of those sloughs was Dudley shortly precipitated, while Pierre, anxious to avoid his fate by riding a little on one side and at a quicker pace, plunged still deeper into another, where the weight of his heavily-laden horse, too much exhausted to

make any vigorous efforts for its extrication, occasioned it to be immoveably stuck. After violent exertions the other horse succeeded in floundering out, when Dudley dismounted, and in his paramount solicitude for his valise, desired Pierre to undo the straps and ropes, and throw one of them to him that he might draw it off, observing, that by lightening the beast, they might, perhaps, enable it to rise. This was accordingly accomplished, and the precious trunk safely deposited upon solid ground; but the poor animal was still incapable of moving; and, to add to their embarrassment, Pierre now found himself so entangled with the stirrup as to be unable to disengage himself, his efforts for this purpose only exposing him to the peril of deeper immersion. In this emergency it was deemed best that he should sit still, while his master rode to the town to procure assistance; but as if it were fated that their expedition should be as disastrous as possible, it was now discovered that the other horse had so strained himself in his struggles as to be utterly unserviceable, so

that no alternative was left but that Dudley should proceed on foot. Muddy as he was, he was obliged to recover the road they had so inadvertently quitted, and toil through the heat with his bonnet in his hand, as he made the circuit to Wells. He had called lustily for assistance as he advanced, but without effect, as the men were all harvesting in another direction, and this circumstance, combined with the impatient anger engendered by his accident, had occasioned him to thunder at the door of "The Tables" public-house, and to alarm Sib Fawcett and her inmates, in the manner related at the conclusion of the last chapter.

## CHAPTER V.

He was a true light-hearted Gaul,
Who laugh'd, let good or ill befall,
With equal gladness;—
Welcom'd whatever Fortune sent,
And found a plea for merriment,
Even in sadness.

When our bemired and unlucky traveller beheld a person in monkish garments in the public room, and observed his broad face to be radiant with benignity and good-humour, he proceeded in more respectful terms to explain the cause of his rude summons, and to solicit the exertion of his authority over the lazy rustics, that they might be compelled to hasten to the assistance of his servant. "Why, my son in the flesh," quoth the friar, "for such I may well call thee, seeing that all flesh is clay, with

which ingredient thou hast already begun to re-incorporate, the lazy rustics, as thou termest them, are all labouring in the fields; but had they surmised that men with eyes in their heads were to be gathered out of the slough upon the hill, doubt not they would have left their sheaves in the valley, and betaken them to the sport of fishing fellow-creatures from the pool. They are partly of my own flock, and I have not neglected to teach them the duty of acting as good Samaritans to the way-farer; '*Pastorum enim negligentia luporum est gaudium. Papæ!* my son, I thought Arthur's slough was well known to all the world, especially since the rogue that stole the Abbot's strawberries was lost and smothered therein."

"Such may be the doom of my servant and his horse," exclaimed Dudley impatiently, "if these rustics be not quickly summoned to their aid."

"That were to lose time," said the friar, "and is the less necessary, as we may do without them; wherefore, Dickon, my toward scholar, hie thee to loose the bucket, and fetch me the

well-rope, and tell Will Mattock, whom thou wilt find shoeing my mule in the smithy, to come back with thee."

"*Imò, Domine Doctor Reverende,*" answered the urchin, pulling his forelock for want of a bonnet, and instantly disappearing.

"Had I not warrant to call him a toward scholar?" exclaimed the monk smiling—"ay, in good sooth, and so is his mother, for she is learned and clerkly in brewing good ale."

Dickon now returned with the well-rope, accompanied by a sturdy, broad-shouldered, bull-headed rustic, whose naked and hairy arms gave promise of pulling at a dead weight with the power and stubborn perseverance of a buffalo.

"Ecce!" cried the monk—"I know Will Mattock to be our stoutest tug-mutton at a feast; and I doubt not he will show as good a stomach at dragging a man and horse out of the mud, as the knuckle-bone out of a wooden dish." Will sniggered and made a grunting noise like a pig, as the latter occupation suggested itself to his mind, while he signified his assent to the

former by a silent nod of the head. These preparations being made, the friar, in spite of the numerous commissions with which he had already been charged by the good gossips of Wells, declared his intention of accompanying the present expedition, and seeing it brought to a happy conclusion, informing Dudley, as they proceeded, that he was himself no mean performer at pulling a rope, having often rung the great bell Joseph, at Glastonbury Abbey, with one hand, though there were many who could not accomplish it with two. In spite of the heat of the weather, the corpulency of his person, and the weight of his capacious wallet, the good father stepped forward at a rate that surprised his companion, until he told him that the quagmire in which they had been plunged was really of a very dangerous nature, having destroyed more men than the stealer of the Abbot's strawberries, whose fate might rather be considered a judgment. "Qui ambulat in tenebris, nescit quò vadit," he exclaimed—"had you been thus entrapped in the dark it were little marvel, but in the day-light there are few

but the blind who step into the pitfall." Dudley confessed that it was his own fault, on which account it would be more distressing to him, should his servant perish in so miserable a manner, and without any of the consolations of religion, which latter clause he added rather out of compliment to his spiritual companion, than from any particular sympathy with Pierre. "Inter pocula et labra," replied the friar—"or as the vulgar give it—'Twixt cup and lip there's many a slip, as you found to your cost when you thought Wells was within reach of your teeth; but grace is as instantaneous as error or accident; wherefore I hold him to have a godly epitaph, who, being killed by a fall from his horse, gives this inscription upon his tomb-stone:

> Betwixt the stirrup and the ground,
> Mercy I ask'd, mercy I found—

although it is better rendered in Latin upon one who slipped from a bridge and was drowned—"Misericordia inter pontem et fontem." Whence it is clear that your servant will have

had time enough, without any spiritual intervention, to procure pardon of his sins."

Dudley was just expressing his hope that they should find him extricated from the quagmire, when Dickon, who had run forward with the rope, came scampering back with great terror in his looks, and proclaimed that the gentleman who had fallen into Arthur's Slough had gone stark staring mad, for he wore earrings like a woman, and though he was singing and chattering as fast as a magpie on a dunghill, Dickon could not understand a syllable of what he was uttering. By this time Pierre's voice became audible, singing with a rapidity and energy that implied his situation to be either exquisitely pleasant or desperately forlorn, for he always made both extremes meet by a song. On approaching him, it was found that he had the latter plea for his vehemence, for, in disengaging himself from the horse, he had floundered into so much worse a part of the bog, that he had sunk up to the chest; and though he was still gradually getting deeper in the clay, he continued shouting with as much

vigour as if he feared that he should hardly have time to complete the second verse:

> " Un cœur qui soupire est dans le delire,
> J'aime bien mieux rire—quel cruel martire!
> Je brave un empire, ou de vains soupirs
> Tiennent lieu de plaisirs."

" My son, my son," cried the friar, " if we save thy life now by one halter, I prophecy thou wilt never lose it by another, for thy features are debonair and blithesome, as if thou wouldst rather frighten away death by a laugh than invite him by a groan, and such are not the faces that wear the hangman's ruff; wherefore, my chirping mud-lark, seize the rope without delay; but put it beneath thine arms, for fear of accident."

Pierre put the noose around his body in the manner directed; the party who had come to his rescue seized the other end; the friar, in order that their efforts might be simultaneous, timed them by singing out a loud " *De pro-fun-dis ;*" and in this manner, by four stout pulls, they hawled up their prize and dragged him upon

the firm soil; when he jumped upon his legs, shook himself, and, as if determined not to speak the language of a country which contained such villanous bogs, returned thanks to his deliverers with all the volubility and gesticulation of a true son of France. "Dang'ee," cried Will Mattock, after he had gazed at him for some time in silent amazement, "had I know'd 'ee to be a Vrenchman, cogswounds! I'd ha' let 'ee sink into the slough, gold ear-rings and all, to go and look vor vrogs. Ho! ho!" "*Bien des remercimens*," exclaimed Pierre, and then turning to his master appealed to him whether they had any such savages in France. "Those who massacred the adventurers at Ouaste," replied Dudley, "had surely as good title to that name: but where has your horse strayed to, for I see he has got out of the bog?"

"And I saw him sink down into it," answered Pierre; "for he plunged to yonder pool, where his head disappeared about ten minutes ago. Pardi! he cannot say I deserted him,

for I was following him as fast as the soft mud would let me, until you stopped me on my journey." When Will Mattock learnt that the animal in question was of Kentish breed, and a stout roadster, he seemed quite overcome by the melancholy reflection that they should have arrived too late to preserve its life, and yet in good time to pull out the Frenchman; observing that he would rather have saved one of its iron shoes than both the Monseer's gold earrings. At the request of the friar, however, he cheerfully undertook to carry Dudley's heavy valise down to Wells; it was accordingly hoisted upon his broad shoulders, which seemed scarcely conscious of their load, and in this manner they trudged back towards the town, Pierre leading his master's lame horse.

Dudley accidentally mentioning as they proceeded, that he was travelling forward to Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice of The Tor,

"Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice!" exclaimed the friar, stopping short and crossing himself.—"Saint Mary defend us, marry and amen! Am I then walking with a friend of Sir Lionel's?"

"I know him not, nor have I ever seen him," replied Dudley; "though I am charged with a message to him of some importance."

"'Ware the hawk—'ware the hawk!" cried the friar; "and if thou art a soldier, as thou sayest, remember it is wise to have a buckler against a battle-axe, and a southern bill against a northern bassard; and recollect that a hint to-day is better than a help to-morrow. Ad præsens ova cras pullis sunt meliora."

"Thanks, good father, even for the hint; but that it may the better speed me, I would fain know the nature of the danger against which it is to guard me."

"Bone Deus, my son! in these parts folks scarcely dare whisper to their own hearts what they think of Sir Lionel, and am I to babble of him to a stranger? Dickon, my child, tarry behind us, and walk with Will Mattock and yonder man of clay, who, if the sun holds thus hot, will be nearly turned to earthenware before we reach the Tables. No, my son," he continued, addressing Dudley in a lower tone of voice, "perhaps I have been rash to have put

thee on thy guard, wherefore I shall only say, trust not his smiles, nor what he may say unto you with his face, for there is nothing in him that speaketh but his tongue, and his tongue serveth but to conceal the language of his heart."

"So may he well be distrusted," observed Dudley; "but why he should be thus deeply feared, I do not see."

"You see not the devil nor the powers of darkness, and yet you do well to fear them, and those who are leagued with them. You know not what manner of man is he, of whom we are speaking, nor may I more plainly tell you. In the bidding prayer, we pray for all archbishops and bishops, and all abbots, priors, monks, canons and friars, and all men and women of religion, as well as for all parsons and curates, vicars, priests, and clerks, and for all good christians, more especially for them that give to the church, book, bell, or candle, chalice, vestment, surplice, water-cloth, lands, rents, lamp, or light; and yet when we have thus done, we

have not prayed for Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice of The Tor."

"By your account, good father, he seems to be in bad odour with the church, and I doubt not he may be a perilous or profane personage, but I am bound to him upon a friendly errand, and have none but a staightforward message to deliver."

"The friendly and the straightforward are the most likely to become his foes, and hitherto his foes have ever been his victims; wherefore if thine embassage end, as is most likely, in sharp words and brandished swords, fight not with him unless he swear the oath of the trial by battle—'This hear, you justices, that I have not upon me either bone, stone, or glass, or any enchantment, sorcery, or witchcraft, whereby the power of the word of God might be inleased or diminished, and the devil's power increased—so help me God and his saints!' Had this been heeded to by the Lord Dawbeney, or Sir Launcelot Wallop, or Master Trevor, they might have been enjoying this bright sun,

and riding at the present moment about their parks and manors, instead of lying in the church-yard with the hole of Sir Lionel's sword through their bodies."

"Good father, I shall have little need of encountering him angrily either with tongue or steel; and thus, however fearful he may be, I dread him not, knowing my purpose to be honest, and trusting to Heaven and my good angel."

"Do so, and may they give thee well to fare! but once more beware the bad angels of The Tor; for as some of the fathers have surmised that the hot fountains of the Bath are supplied by the tears of the fallen spirits, verily I should not marvel if the well-head were to be found within the domain of Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice. Salve! Peace and safety be with you! Lay these tidings to your heart, and at matin-mass or even-song, fail not to repeat after the priest—*à cæcitate cordis, libera nos, Domine!*"—So saying, the friar turned aside in order to mount his mule, and execute the various benevolent commissions and visitations, of which he had minutes

in his little manuel, leaving Dudley, as he proceeded with his companions towards Sib Fawcett's, to meditate upon the dark and mysterious intimations he had received respecting Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice.

For these cogitations, however, but little time was allowed him, as they presently reached the house, when having seen his precious valise bestowed in a place of safety, he was ushered by Sib Fawcett into an inner apartment, while Pierre, taking his seat upon the form in the public room, was supplied with a loaf of meslin or rye bread, a slice of Taunton cheese, and a foaming tankard of ale, on which sumptuous repast he made an immediate and unsparing attack.

While he was thus occupied, such of the gossips as remained, reinforced by some of their daughters, and a few rustics who had strayed in, attracted by Will Mattock's report that they might see a Frenchman with rings in his ears, who had been dragged out of Arthur's Slough, stood around him at his meal, the whole party making clownish mock of the un-

usual golden appendages, laughing at his muddy plight, and saluting him with every species of gibe, jeer, and insult that could be directed against his country in general, and himself in particular. All this had no further effect upon Pierre, while he continued discussing his repast, than to occasion an accumulation of laughter and good-humour to spread itself over his features, so that when he had emptied the tankard, and arching his black brows half-way up his forehead, looked round him with a smile, that, while it disclosed his large white teeth, seemed to fill every wrinkle and dimple of his face with fun, frolic, and good humour, its expression was too broadly comical to be resisted, and his persecutors simultaneously burst into a peal of laughter. There was still something contemptuous in the merriment, but their undefined feelings of hostility presently yielded to his unconquerable vivacity and kindliness of heart, as he started up, snapped his fingers, and first sang and danced by himself, and then presenting his muddy figure and hand to one of the younger damsels, invited her with a mock ceremonious-

ness to become his partner. The shrieks of the wenches, and their eager struggles to avoid contact with his muddy clothes, as, with a look of ineffable comicality, he pursued them round the room, politely tendering his discoloured hand, and humming a French dance—the loud cackling and coughing of the gossips, with the deep chuckle of the boors, who were hugely delighted at the distress of the women—combined with the jaunty air of the mud-bedaubed Pierre as he slid his foot along the floor and continued his unacceptable courtship, formed altogether a scene which could not be contemplated without participating in the mirth of the actors, and which justified the boisterous uproar of merriment that made Sib Fawcett's whole tenement re-echo to its clamour.

That important personage in the meanwhile, was by no means in such good-humour, or so well pleased with her guest, as her customers in the public room were with his happy-dispositioned and amusing servant. Like most of the young gallants who had spent any time in France, Dudley had returned with an unmea-

sured contempt and distaste for every thing English, a feeling in some degree warranted by the indisputable inferiority of our countrymen at that period, in almost all points and pursuits that tended to the embellishment of existence, and in many that ministered merely to its comforts. All the more ingenious and delicate manufactures that were carried on, even in London, were in the hands of foreigners, a circumstance which had often occasioned clamour and sometimes tumult among the clumsy natives; so that there was then some excuse for that patronage of fashion which was limited exclusively to articles of foreign product. Such are the changes in national modes and habits, that our neighbours were at that æra as superior to us in the accommodation afforded by their inns and public-houses, as they now confessedly fall short of us; and Dudley, who had been not a little annoyed by this circumstance during his cross-country journey into Somersetshire, was prepared for a new shock to his fastidious nerves and temper, at every new inn that he entered. The bad odour of the public room,

predominating over even the effluvia emitted by the mud with which he was bespattered, had not tended to mollify the ill-temper generated by his accident; and his look and tone were not therefore a whit more ingratiating than his language, when he exclaimed to Sib Fawcett—"Good woman, if you have any chamber sweeter than a hog-sty, or any provisions fitting for a Christian to eat, it would like me to see them."

The person thus discourteously addressed, who from the consciousness of a substantial store of royals and nobles, in addition to her thriving trade, had the feeling of independence to back the natural shrewishness of her disposition, was so little disposed to submit meekly to this indignity, that she replied with the face of a turkey-cock, and in a voice scarcely more musical—"Hogsty, quotha! marry come up, and dainty enough too, an it were, for such a good-man jakes as thou art. Fit for a Christian to eat? Gadamercy! thou art more like Mahound in a stage-play than a good Christian: and many a better gentleman, I trow, has held it

toothsome fare, to dine upon a trencher of mammocks, and a horn of dead small-beer with flies in it." As Dudley foresaw, by the countenance and sturdy bearing of his hostess, that he might chance to diminish rather than increase his accommodation by huffing and hectoring, he found it not only expedient to soften his tone, but producing a heavily lined purse, under pretence of seeing that he had not lost any of its contents, he declared that if he found his present quarters comfortable, he might probably prolong his stay for several days, or at least until his horse was sufficiently recovered to proceed. This intimation produced so sedative an effect upon Sib, who, though rather vixenish in her temper, had ever a prudent eye to the main chance, that she assumed a mollified look, and crying out "Meg! Meg! bring fresh rushes and clean linen into the Horn Chamber," proceeded herself to show him the way to the apartment. This room was the one up-stairs, to which we have already alluded, as having its two latticed windows furnished with horn shavings, a piece of luxury and distinction

from which it had derived its appellation. Neither the dim yellow light, however, which this substitute for glass allowed to penetrate, nor the appearance of the bed in one corner of the place, were at all calculated to propitiate Dudley, who exclaimed with a distasteful countenance—"Surely, hostess, you have something better than this miserable flock for a weary man to lay his bones upon."

"Ods pittikins! my master," cried Sib; "I would wager a tester ye 're one of those dainty palliards from abroad, who can fancy nothing unless it be new-fangled, and who must be cockered and coddled, and sleep as soft as an abbot's lap-dog. Marry, there be many can remember the day, though I am but a youngster myself, when travellers were fain to lie upon a straw pallet with a simple coverlet of dagswaine, and a good round log under their heads for a bolster, as the best yeomen did in the land; and these were the men, I trow, who won some of the stoutest towns in France. If the richest farmer in Somersetshire has a sack of chaff to rest his head upon, he holds himself

to be as gingerly bestowed as the lord of the manor; whereas you have a pillow,—which none should require but a sick marmoset,—stuffed with feathers from my own poultry; and here comes Meg with clean sheets of lockram, and fresh-gathered rushes, and what would ye wish for more."

"Nay, I knew not, my good hostess, that I was so sumptuously cared for, but when you ask me what I would wish for more, I answer that I have fasted long, and travelled far, and it would like me well to know the contents of your larder."

"Mass; there is every thing in it that ye can hope to find on a scambling day, as this is. I have neither chet loaf, nor manchets, nor trencher-bread of white wheaten; but there's as good ravelled bread and meslin as ever was chewed, ay, and wholesome bran-bread, though I warrant me ye wouldn't touch it. If ye fancy a rare Taunton cheese, I have one that would tickle the King's tooth, and ale of my own tunning to drink with it, which ye shall dream of for a week after tasting it."

"But as for fish, flesh, or fowl?"—said Dudley inquiringly.

"By the rood! ye may have them all three, and all of the best, for there is salt ling in the tub, a fleck of brawn newly killed in the larder, and as for fowl ye may have your choice of the poultry that ye hear cackling in the back yard, and Dickon shall kill it in a minute."

"No hen shall need to die for me," said Dudley, "if I may carouse upon her eggs instead, which, with the good cheer you have mentioned, I would fain behold as soon as I am in fitter plight for doing honour to it." His valise was already carried into the chamber, he was furnished with proper apparatus for performing his ablutions, and Sib Fawcett having informed him that his nag should fare as proudly as its master, since she could supply three loaves of horse-bread for a penny, made of good peas, beans, and lawful stuff, withdrew to give directions for the dinner, or rather supper, of both parties. While discussing these weighty points with her guest, she had been not less surprised than scandalized at the prodigious uproar below,

which she thought calculated to give her new visitant an unfavourable impression of her house, and perhaps to shorten his stay. It was, therefore, with a face of more than usually waspish expression, and in a shrill voice of predominant sharpness, that she exclaimed as she bounced into the public room, where the merriment occasioned by Pierre was kept up with unabated clamour—"Why, how now, ye roystering knaves and rampant beldames; does the ale-sop dance in your noddles, that ye keep up this pestilent coil; as if ye were so many bedlamites at a bear-baiting? The Tables is an orderly house and an honest, not a morrice-booth, I trow, nor a bordello for drunken trampers and their screeching joans. Beshrew me, an I do not send for the constable, if ye silence not this rantipole hurlyburly."

Pierre, however, the principal author of the confusion, was so far from being appalled by this menace, that advancing up to its wrathful utterer, he took her by the hand with an air of burlesque politeness, and whirling her gently

round and round, as if in the performance of a waltze, hummed a French air, to which he adapted his own steps with a gracefulness that was rendered ridiculous by its contrast with his mud-enveloped figure. "Begone, thou French carrion, thou dunghill jackanapes, thou bespattered scarecrow!" cried Sib, with increased anger; but Pierre, dropping upon one knee, pressed her imprisoned hand to his heart, heaved a deep sigh, and looked up into her forbidding and love-repelling face, with such an expression of ludicrous and ineffable tenderness, that even Sib could resist no longer. She relaxed into an involuntary smile, exclaimed—"Devil speed the fellow! was ever such another mountebank fool!" and disengaging her hand, ran hastily out of the room, in order to conceal the titter which was ready to burst from between her compressed lips.

Animated by this victory over the hostess's habitual sourness, especially after the petulant threats she had just been launching against themselves, the whole party broke into a new

peal of laughter, and continued their merry gambols until Pierre's fatigue compelled him to make his bow to the assemblage, and recruit his strength, after the exertions of this eventful day, by betaking himself to his straw pallet for the night.

## CHAPTER VI.

Bear-ward and carrier here you have,
Men, horses, bruin, in a cave,
Each other fright'ning.
Silence! ye brawlers, when ye 're bid;
What! will ye wrangle thus amid
Thunder and lightning?

Before he arose on the following morning, Dudley's thoughts reverted to the strange cautions he had received respecting Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice, and though he suspected much of the friar's prejudice to have probably arisen from some omission of the annual offerings at the shrines of St. Mary, or St. Joseph of Arimathea, in whose wealth and splendour the worthy father was interested, he determined, before he took his departure for The Tor, to sound his hostess upon the subject. He had seen sufficient proof

that her house was a place of general resort, and concluded that the good ale-topers who frequented it would be sure to possess her with all the scandal of the neighbourhood, well knowing the freedom with which the lower orders generally, and such gossips in particular, canvas the characters and actions of their superiors. As soon, therefore, as he had finished his breakfast, he sought an interview with Sib, whose natural acerbity of look and manner was a little softened by the prospect of retaining so unusual a customer, and inquired whether she could enable him to hire two goodly steeds, for himself and servant, as his own was still lame, and he had occasion to visit Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice of the Tor, without delay.

The redness which was usually confined to the good woman's nose, spread itself over her whole face as she made the sign of the cross, and exclaimed, "Heaven shield us! perhaps you are a friend of Sir Lionel's."

"No, indeed," replied Dudley, somewhat surprised that she should make the same inquiry the friar had done, as if the prejudice extended

to all his friends, as well as to the knight himself. "I am a perfect stranger to Sir Lionel."

"Then why, o' heaven's name, should you be going to the Tor House?"

"I have business there that may be soon dispatched, when I may perhaps return to renew acquaintance with your good ale. But you speak as if there were danger in passing the threshold of the Tor House. Know you aught against Sir Lionel?"

"Who, I? Marry, heaven forfend that I should utter syllable against him. He is a knight, and a justice of the peace, and a rich and powerful and right worshipful gentleman, and they must have stout hearts, and sharp swords, that would dare to gainsay it."

"If rumour speak sooth," resumed Dudley, "he himself wields a keen and cruel sword. I have heard, that the Lord Dawbeney and two others, whose names have slipped me, were done to death by him."

"God's pity, Sir! and so they were, and as brave and christian gentlemen as any in these parts, but it was all in the way of fair and hon-

ourable combat; and sad it is to think that our knights and squires should spill one another's blood in the duello, when they may have as many Frenchmen to fight with, by only crossing the water, as the most ruffling blade could wish for."

"The subject of their quarrels is of course well known," observed Dudley.

"Ay, that I warrant me it is to them that inquire," replied the cautious Sib,—"but this is ticklish matter, wherewith I neither meddle nor make. I may have my own thoughts as well as another, but,

When the rain raineth, and the goose winketh,
Little wotteth the gosling what the goose thinketh.

"So, Sir, I will send Dickon for the good steeds you spoke of, and as for Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice of the Tor, I say once more, Heaven forbid I should deny him to be a right honourable knight and a worshipful justice of the peace."

Suspecting that she knew more about him than she thought it prudent to disclose, Dudley endeavoured to detain her, and extract if possible some further information; but she no sooner

perceived his design than she took fright, parried all his questions, or professed a total ignorance, and seized the excuse of a sudden noise for running away, proclaiming her apprehensions that the unlucky black sow was again playing the mischief in the brewhouse. The only new intelligence he had been able to gather was, that Sir Lionel had a daughter of fresh and stately beauty, though it was the fashion on that side the country to hold her somewhat over-proud and haughty; an imputation, however, which the wary Sib protested to be perfectly unmerited in her opinion; as she had once stopped at the Tables to refresh her horse, when she tossed a penny to Dickon, smiled upon him graciously, and had been evidently much struck by his sweetness of look and briskness of attendance.

The horses having been brought to the door for inspection, and received Dudley's approbation, Pierre was ordered to array himself in his handsome French livery, which had been fortunately deposited in the valise, while his master retired to his own room to settle the important point of what dress he should select for his

first visit. In that age of costly magnificence, when nobles vied with each other in the extravagance of their wardrobes, and it was not unusual to exhaust the produce of a manor upon a single suit of clothes, this was a more momentous consideration than it might now appear. Dudley had been present at the celebrated interview between Henry and Francis the First of France, in the field of the cloth of gold, when the English monarch himself had set the first example of that boundless profusion, and almost incredible gorgeousness of personal appearance, which had not only ruined many of his nobles at the time, but pervading all the better classes of society, had diffused a rage for splendid apparel which it became ultimately necessary to check by sumptuary laws. Dudley's youth and less prominent station had precluded any particular display in that great rivalry of glistering gawdiness, but he had there imbibed a taste for foppery and finery not likely to be abandoned by one who had plentiful means for its gratification, and who belonged to the army, a class that has ever been among

the most ardent votaries of personal decoration and splendour. Fortunately for its more triumphant display upon this occasion, it was not the fashion for the military, even when out of their accoutrements and trappings, to wear mourning for relations killed in battle, so that Dudley, whose vanity had been stimulated to present himself to the best advantage before Sir Lionel's daughter, was not restrained in its indulgence by the recent death of his uncle.

His figure was remarkably good, a circumstance not likely to be overlooked in his selection; but it was necessary also to evince his taste by the novelty, and his command of money by the richness, of his habiliments. After due consideration of these combined claims, he arrayed himself with great solemnity and deliberation in a suit of murrey satin, the doublet embroidered all over, as well as the panes of the hose, with seed pearl and gold lace; his cloak was of russet uncut velvet, lined with satin, and richly laced; his girdle and hanger, scabbard, hat, and band, were of suitable colours, and the richest materials; and his em-

broidered shoes were copiously furnished with roses, points, and golden tags. Part of these equipments were entrusted to Pierre, to be put on when he should reach the Tor; and as the remainder was little calculated for the public gaze, or a horseman's wearing, he threw over the whole a travelling surtout, putting loose wrappers about his legs that resembled our modern over-alls.

Thus enveloped, he showed scarcely so brave and gay as his servant, who wore a doublet of yellow million fustian, one half buttoned with peach-coloured buttons, and the other half laced downwards; peach-coloured hose, with small tawny lace; a grey hat, with a copper edge, and peach band; watchet stockings; and a vesey-coloured cloak, guarded with black cloth, and twisted lace of carnation, and lined with crimson baize. To assist his toilette, his master had kindly spared him a modicum of his French ointments of perfumes, so that when Pierre, thus scented and apparelled, recalled his bespattered and unsavoury plight upon the preceding evening, he could scarcely believe in his

personal identity, until he assured himself of that desirable fact by commencing "*Colin mangeant des artichaux*," which he sang all through with prodigious loudness and animation, and then treated his master with a *da-capo*.

Concluding that Sir Lionel dined at twelve, which was then the customary hour with the nobility and gentry, and not wishing to present himself until after that meal, Dudley started about noon, so that he was exposed with all the garments and coverings we have described to the full heat of the meridian sun. Accustomed as he had been to carry harness, beneath which it was usual to wear a suit of leather, thickly quilled, padded, and provided with cushions to prevent the galling of the armour, it may be supposed that he was proof against the fiercest rays, when emancipated from such ponderous burthens. It was not, therefore, from any inconvenience occasioned by the sun, although sweltering beneath embroidered doublet, lined cloak, and thick surtout, that he confined his horse to a walking pace, but from an apprehension that any unseemly heat might unbecomingly affect

his personal appearance, and perhaps derange the economy of his dress. While proceeding in this leisurely manner, picking his way to avoid the dust, and take the benefit of the shade, he beheld at a little distance the townsfolks of Wells collected together on a common and shooting at the butts, a practice which was enjoined by act of parliament to be observed upon holidays, and at every other convenient time. He directed his horse towards them in order to observe their exercise, coming up just as the sturdy Will Mattocks, having prepared his long bow for a random shot, cried aloud—"Fast!" a signal which every archer was obliged to give before loosing his arrow, in order that the people around might have warning to stand fast. "Ho, ho!" cried Will when he saw that he had passed the mark, and had outshot all his competitors—"Cogswounds! Leigh, the Wigan lawyer, that shot a mile in three flights, could na do better than that'n.—Dange' all, will'ee beat that'n? Not one on'ee by the mass, and I shall be Duke of Shoreditch for the day, ho, ho!"

As he turned round at this exclamation, he beheld Pierre; when dropping his under-jaw, and fixing his eye upon him for some time with a stare of stupid wonder, he at length slapped his hand upon his thigh, and ejaculated—

"Ods bodikins! thee be'est the Vrenchman I pulled out o' Arthur's slough, vor all thy jackadandy jacket. What ho, my merry bowmen, loosen string, and quit butt, and coom look at this'n Vrench javell wi' hoops in his ears." At this summons the rustics, quitting their exercise, surrounded him as they had done at Sib Fawcett's, mocking and mowing, and bursting into clownish laughter, and saluting him with the grossest epithets; not content with which, one of them goaded his horse in the flanks, so as to make it caper and plunge. Pierre, who was by no means an expert horseman, attributing these prancings to the animal's impatience to depart, tried for some time to soothe it by patting its neck, and coaxing it with exclamations of "*Eh bien! que veux tu donc? Attends! attends!*" expedients which only increased the merriment of the boors, and

encouraged them to continue tormenting the beast. Dudley was so highly amused by his man's awkward efforts to retain his seat, as well as the grotesque expression of his face, wherein a wish to appear more than usually gay and nonchalant was evidently mixed with a considerable portion of distress at the capriccios of his steed, that he suffered these manœuvres to last longer than he would otherwise have permitted. At length, however, Will Mattocks, naturally brutal, and elated by his recent triumph in shooting, transferred the goadings of his arrow from the horse to his rider, whom he ventured to spur sharply in the calf of his leg. This pointed joke Pierre endured at first with only a sudden start, and an exclamation of "*Comment!*" but he had no sooner discovered the nature and the author of it, than he raised his riding staff and let it fall on Will's bull-head with such a hearty accost that the blood spurted from the wound.

"'Swounds and 'snails!" cried the infuriated rustic, "will 'ee zuffer English blood to be spilled o' that'n, by a Vrench dog wi' hoops in 's ears?

Coom on, my masters! Dang'ee, tuoad, we'll chuck 'ee into a worse placé than Arthur's slough."

"Down with the Mounseer! down with him! St. George for England!" was echoed by his companions, some of whom brandished their bows, while others were hastily stringing them, and gathering round Pierre with angry cries and menacing gestures, when Dudley, drawing his sword, and spurring into the midst of them, exclaimed in a loud voice, "Fall back, ye dunghill knaves and ruffian grooms! ye were rightly served if ye had all a broken coxcomb like yonder churl, in reward for your red-lattice ribaldry. Loose bridle, thou blustering caitiff! or by our Lady, thou shalt not have a hand to hold with." At these words, and the uplifted rapier that accompanied them, Will Mattock removed his grasp from Pierre's bridle, and the whole party drew together for their mutual protection, without any appearance, however, of having abandoned their hostile intentions, until Dudley continued, "We are bound towards a justice of the peace hard by, and we will not be stopped by such a clownish crew; but if any of ye feel

aggrieved, ye may e'en trudge forward with us to Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice."

Nothing could be more sudden and subduing than the effect produced by the mention of this name. Turning instantly round, that their faces might not be recognized, several of the party hurried back to the butts, and resumed their exercise; others vailed bonnet, drew their feet along the grass, and humbly asked pardon; and one after another the whole assemblage had sneaked away, except Will Mattock, whose lately furious expression was now altered to one of submission, and even terrified intercession, as he stood twiddling his thrum-cap with both hands, and exclaimed to Pierre—"Now, lord love'ee, Mr. Mounseer Vrenchman, doan't'ee mention my name to Zir Lionel—doan't'ee now!"

"*Pardi, mon brave homme,*" said Pierre, stretching out his arm, and shaking hands with him, "we are now such good friends, that I care not ever to mention your name, or see your face again."

"Thank'ee, thank'ee, kindly," replied the

rustic, and returned to his companions with a less chop-fallen air, while Pierre, looking first on one side, then on the other, with a smirk of infinite good-humour and vivacity, trotted after his master, singing aloud

"Eh, Palsanguê Pierrot, boutte bas ton chagrin."

"Certes," thought Dudley to himself, as he pursued his way, "if this Sir Lionel knew how to overawe the gentry by his sword, and the clergy by his character, although I cannot discover what it is, it should seem that he exercises no less mysterious a control over the vulgar, since the very mention of his name suffices to make the peasants cower and quail, even in their most chafing moods. If his dark deeds had earned him this fearful reputation, I should hear them named. Illegitimate by birth, and moderate in fortune, he can have no power, except as the friend and representative of my late uncle, which may have been sufficient to raise him to the magistracy, but will not in any way account for this wide-spread and yet undefined apprehension. Surely some idle and absurd superstition attaches itself to his name,

of which he is perhaps unconscious, and at which he himself would be the first to laugh. But I shall soon be enabled to form my own opinion, for yonder, in the plain, I see the vast and venerable pile of Glastonbury Abbey; above it, on the height, rises the lofty Tor of St. Michael; and the battlemented walls and towers by its side are doubtless those of the Tor House, wherein this formidable ogre holds his court. Be he giant or magician, infidel, or cannibal, wizard, necromancer, or demon, I will storm his castle; though I fear that when I have once passed the drawbridge, the enchantment, according to established usage, will be dissolved, aud I shall find Sir Lionel neither more nor less than he was represented by my good hostess of the Tables—a right special and honourable knight, and a worshipful justice of the peace."

Indulging in these ruminations, he had now advanced so near to the Tor House, as to have a distinct view of its antique style of architecture, when it became evident that nature was about to refresh the earth, after the oppressive

sultriness of the morning, by a storm. Clouds suddenly springing up from different points of the horizon, obscured the sun as they converged towards each other, squally gusts of wind ruffled up the dust, and even small particles of stick and straw, into little circles and eddies, some of which were borne upwards to a considerable height; the swallows and other birds flew screaming past them; the bellowing cattle scudded across the meadows and fields in search of shelter—while a few scattered and unusually large drops of rain, indenting the dust which they were not numerous enough to allay, announced the near approach of the tempest.

Foreseeing that it would be severe, and anxious to avoid the smallest soiling of his new French suit, Dudley looked anxiously around in search of secure shelter, when he observed that the peasants, quitting their work, were hurrying towards a round-looking rock, at some little distance a-head of him, to which several travellers were also seen hastening from different directions. Concluding that they had the same object as himself, he spurred forward, and

presently reached Hollow-stone point, a place which had been originally, as its name indicated, nothing but a projecting stone, although such excavations had been subsequently made beneath it, for the purpose of procuring stones, that the recess would afford safe shelter to a considerable assemblage. When Dudley reached it, he found several persons, some on foot and some on horseback, collected within it, but he was enabled without difficulty to place himself and Pierre in perfect security from the rain, which now fell in torrents, and being collected by the sloping rock above, descended in a sort of mimic waterfall over the opening. In this situation he remained, gazing at the heavy shower, with that expression of forlorn resignation which our countrymen are so often called upon to assume under similar circumstances, while Pierre, having dismounted, was kissing his horse, and laughing heartily at his own conceit as he sang "*Aimez-moi, comme je vous aime;*" when all the animals in the place began to snort and tremble, and shrink to the extremity of the

recess, with signs of terror, for which their owners were utterly unable to account, until a large muzzled bear was led by his keeper into the place, followed by half-a-dozen mastiffs. Among those already snugly sheltered within, was a carrier with three stout pack-horses, laden with wool, and bound for the Bath. These bulky beasts becoming restive at the unwelcome intrusion of the hairy savage, and shaking the bells in their heads, and snorting in a manner that alarmed their owner, he called out in no very courteous tone—"What, ho! you tramping ronyon, troop off with your Sackerson and his curs, for see you not that you are scaring better beasts than yourself?"

"Ods-niggers!" replied the fellow thus addressed; "what saucy customer is this? What the foul fiend! are such snipes as you to creep under the dry stone, while the king's bearward stands in the rain?"

"The King's bearward?" resumed the carrier—"which king, trow, for we have two in these parts, the King of the Hill and the King of

the Valley; or, in other words, Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice of the Tor Hill, and the good Abbot of Glastonbury."

"Troth! and they say we have two in London—King Cardinal Wolsey, and King Henry the Eighth; which latter I own for my master, and here is his badge upon my arm, and I and Sackerson and my dogs are ready to fight for him against all comers of equal weight and number, wherefore we hold ourselves as well entitled to a dry corner as any such sheep-snipping craven as thou art."

"Mass! I wish your bruin were where he came from, and yourself wearing his chain, or baited by the dogs, as many a better brute has been. So ho, Dobbin! gently, Ball, gently! back, Wall-eye, back! By 'r lady, here will be mischief, an you put not forth Hairy-hide, for my pack horses eat good corn, and no man can hold 'em when it likes 'em to break loose."

"Was ever such a doddipate as this?" exclaimed the bearward,—"that expects full-bellied horses to be governed by an empty-headed ass. Turn their noses to the dark cor-

ner, thou peremptory gull, that they may not see the beast, or their jangling bells may be likely to frighten Bruin, as they have already set the dogs a-howling." The carrier did as he was recommended: the other horsemen, seeing the good effects of the movement, imitated his example, and a comparative quiet succeeded to the discord of jingling bells, snorting horses, howling curs, and wrangling men, of which the bearward availed himself to continue the conversation. "Which of ye, masters, mentioned Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice of the Tor Hill, for thitherward am I bound, understanding that, on the morrow after the Assumption, he presides at the annual bull-chase in these parts, and I would fain know whether he is a lover of the bearward's sport, and likely to give him profitable welcome, which I am told he can well afford to do."

"Marry they have told you truth," said the carrier, "for all the manors hereabout that belong not to the King of the Valley, belong to the King of the Hill, who must have what likes him, willy-nilly; or the Lord Dawbeney, Sir

Launcelot Wallop, and Master Trevor would neither have tasted cold steel, nor be now lying in the cold earth."

"'Ware the hawk! Sir Knight of the Woolpack," cried a voice from among the assemblage, —"you are a stranger, or you would know that there may be peril in letting your tongue wag thus freely."

"Slid!" cried the carrier—"I have fat horses in my stable and good royals in my pouch, and I will hold my tongue for no man, when it likes me to speak the sooth. I am neither Sir Lionel's vassal nor his varlet; I never gained by him to the validome of a two-penny chicken, and I am not like to lose as much by saying that which ye all know, though ye may be too faint-hearted to open mouth. So ho, Dobbin! gently, Ball!"

"And is the good abbot," inquired the bearward, "one of those who will shed his silver for seeing Sackerson fight?"

"Not unless it be to take a lesson," replied the carrier—"for he promises soon to have fighting enough of his own; and mass! when

the two kings of the hill and valley come together, the thunder will be of worse peril than that which now blusters above our heads without harming us. Prythee, is it true, my masters, that the devil was seen to jump from one of the chimneys of the Tor House, some three weeks agone, into such another thunder-cloud as that now hanging over the church?"

"Harkee! sir constable of the whip," cried the same voice that had previously warned him—"when you were crawling along under Weary-all-hill with your fat geldings, did I not hear you trolling the ballad of Andrew Barton?—

'The King look'd over his left shoulder,
And an angry look then looked he,
Have I never a Lord in all my realm,
Will fetch yon traitor unto me?'"

"Ay, marry, such was my song, and what then, trow?"

"Why then, my good friend, when you find your tongue running faster and louder than your horses' bells, you would do well to recollect that the King of the Hill, in whose realm you are thus clacking, has only to utter the

same words, and your fastest gelding cannot prevent your being presently seized and brought up to him."

"Beshrew thee, for a talking knave and a saucy! am I then a traitor for repeating what I heard from the abbot's summoner, who was standing beneath a tree for the rain, as we may be now, when he marked a devil upon the tallest chimney-top of the Tor House, wagging its tail, and butting with his horns at a black cloud over his head; when lo! my masters, it no sooner opened its fiery jaws for the lightning to leap out, than the demon jumped in, and disappeared. Back, Wall-eye, back! what are you shaking your bells at? Wo-ho, poor fellow!"

No one took any notice of this strange story, and there was a silence of a minute or two, until a voice ejaculated—"Would to Heaven the brave and good Sir Giles Hungerford were among us again!" to which several responded, Amen!

"Or that Master Cecil," resumed the former speaker, "had recovered his full wits, and were

of man's estate, and holding the Tor House." To this wish the amens were still more numerous, and the bearward was just making some new inquiry respecting master Cecil, when a peal of thunder that threatened to shake down the impending stone above them, followed by an almost blinding flash of lightning, kept the whole assemblage, for a short time, in an awe-struck silence. Ere they were sufficiently recovered to resume the conversation, one of the peasants, with an exclamation of terror, fell upon his knees, crossed himself, and pointing towards the Tor Hill, cried out,—"Saint Mary shield us! there he is! there he is! God grant he send not the lightning among us!" after which aspiration, he commenced repeating his paternoster with great eagerness. As his companions directed their eyes to the point indicated, they seemed to be equally struck aghast; many imitated his example by falling on their knees, and all exhibited symptoms of profound awe and apprehension. Where Dudley first stood, he could not discover the object which had so powerfully affected them, but he had no

sooner changed his position, than at the extremity of a lofty terrace, projecting from the Tor House, he beheld a tall dark figure with a long wand in his hand which he was pointing at the sky, and waving about with a slow and majestic motion. The black clouds having parted immediately behind him, and admitting a bright ray of light, not only threw out his figure in bold and distinct relief, but from the elevation of the hill and its crowning terrace, upon the edge of the horizon, gave him the appearance of some superior being walking in the sky. This mysterious personage, as he understood from the exclamations of those around him, was the much-feared Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice; while a little deformed figure, which presently afterwards became visible, by his side, and wore very much the look of an imp of darkness attendant on its master-spirit, was identified by the whispering peasants as "the Doctor."

Cowering into one corner, as if they dreaded to be seen by the formidable figure, who seemed to be giving orders to the angry elements, and directing their wrath; and yet unable to

withdraw their eyes, as if fascinated by the apparition before them, the peasants continued to watch the movements of his wand, shrinking with increased agony whenever it took a direction towards themselves, in apparent apprehension that the lightning, which still played about him, would leap whithersoever he pointed, and consume and destroy according to his orders. Others remembering the carrier's tale of the demon, which was implicitly believed in those parts, fixed their eyes upon the hunch-backed dwarf at his side, in apparent expectation that he would take advantage of the next rent made by the lightning to leap into the clouds. "The abbey! the abbey!" was at length exclaimed by several, from which Dudley, who recollected the alleged hostility between the Kings of the Hill and of the Valley, conjectured that they expected some mischief to fall on the venerable pile; but its lofty towers and chapels, thrown into deep shade by the clouds, seemed to be sternly frowning at the storm, and bidding defiance to its utmost fury. Still were their eyes rivetted with an intense and almost breathless

interest, first upon the figures on the terrace, and then on the sacred building; but the tempest now began to abate and clear off. Sir Lionel and his deformed companion stalked back to the mansion and disappeared; the thunder rolled muttering away; the song of the birds overpowered the diminished pattering of the water, as it dripped from the hollow stone; the sun broke brightly through the scattered clouds, a rainbow spanned the opposite arch of the heavens, and the abbey was seen to glitter uninjured as the returning rays lighted up its far-extending walls. Inspired with fresh confidence at a conclusion which refuted their sinister and ominous forebodings, the rustics began to breathe with more freedom, and talk in a louder tone; the carrier ventured to cut a few jokes upon Sir Lionel's odd taste for walking in the rain, and poking at the clouds with a hop-pole; the bearward declared with a laugh, that if he would sell the little hump-backed doctor he would clap him atop of his bear instead of a monkey; and the whole party were preparing to separate with renovated

courage, when a column of dark smoke, laced with occasional gleams of fire, was seen to arise at some distance, and two or three of the peasants exclaimed, at the same moment, that the abbot's grange was on fire. In a few moments, the flames bursting forth with increased violence, not only confirmed this assertion, but showed that the whole building, with its stacks and ricks, would be shortly consumed; and the terrors of the peasants, who immediately assigned this calamity to the supernatural influence of the abbot's arch-enemy, returned with redoubled force. Their voices again subsided to a whisper, as they slunk off muttering paternosters and ave-marys; the carrier collected his beasts in solemn silence, and hurried away; while the bearward, too much intimidated to resume his bantering tone, and yet too sturdy to betray the smallest apprehension, made a sort of compromise, by whistling most valiantly, as he trudged forward with bruin by his side, and his troop of dogs behind him.

Dudley, who had been an attentive observer of this scene, although he had forborne from in-

termingling in the conversation, proceeded also on his route, lost in a variety of conjectures. Hitherto he had attributed all the terrors of the country-folks, and much of the evil reputation that attached to Sir Lionel, either to a blind superstition, or the dread inspired by his bloody deeds as a duelist; but he had now seen him, giving countenance to the prejudice against him, by conduct, at least, as dark and mysterious as the rumours that were circulated in the neighbourhood; and though the burning of the abbot's grange might be a mere accidental coincidence, he could not but confess that the mode and moment of its occurrence were well calculated to confirm all the sinister suspicions of the observers. To an ardent and daring mind, however, there is something stimulating in the idea of encountering a personage, from whom all the rest of the world are shrinking in dismay. Curiosity to develope Sir Lionel's character and motives was now combined with this feeling, while the description he had heard of his daughter's beauty was not without its influence

in increasing his impatience, as he pushed forward to the Tor House.

As to Pierre, he had been too much occupied in kissing and singing to his horse to pay much attention to the conversation around him, or even to the storm that was raging without, although he now sympathized so vivaciously with the restored gaiety of nature, as to sing without intermission until they arrived at the embattled Gate-house, which formed the entrance to the residence of Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice.

## CHAPTER VII.

A stately damsel fresh and fair,
Gracing her garments rich and rare
With noble carriage.
Ah! let not pride such features stain,
Nor e'en a beautiful disdain,
Those charms disparage!

THE Tor House was one of those ancient baronial structures, originally built for the purposes of security, as well as for the display of state, although since the termination of the wars of the Roses, its defences had been neglected, and Sir Giles Hungerford's intention of restoring them to their former strength had been frustrated by his almost uninterrupted absence in the service of his country. Two circular towers, with embattled tops and conical roofs, flanking a narrow machicolated Gothic archway,

over whose heavy architrave the arms of Hungerford were sculptured, constituted the Gate-house, which, as already stated, stood at some distance in advance of the main building. The causeway that joined them was enclosed by stone walls of moderate height withinside, but which from the scarping of the hill without, presented an elevation that could, when the ground was originally cut away, only be surmounted by escalade. Nature, however, resuming her bountiful dominion, had so thickly clothed the slope with shrubs and underwood, that an assailant would have found in some places a ladder of boughs ready placed against the wall, and reaching nearly to its summit. The main building consisted of a principal court for the state rooms and dwelling apartments, with a smaller one behind it for the offices. The latter stretched back to the steep ascent of the Tor Hill, upon which it rested, while a flight of steps led to a terrace upon the very brow of that precipitous eminence, nearly parallel with the base of the lofty tower or Tor of Saint Michael's church, which still stands conspicuous

and entire, while the ancient mansion of the Hungerfords, to which it had imparted its name, has so utterly disappeared, that not a vestige of its existence remains. At each corner of the great court stood a circular tower, with conical roof of the same form as those at the Gate-house, and the whole was enclosed on three sides by a dry ditch, over which, at the termination of the causeway, there had formerly been a drawbridge, although a permanent and fixed communication had now supplanted it. The terrace, and the inaccessibility of the hill, on the edge of which it was placed, were the only defences for the back of the mansion.

Upon his arrival at the Gate-house, into which he requested to be ushered for the final arrangement of his dress, before he presented himself, Dudley was astonished at the signs of a stately and numerous establishment which he was already enabled to observe. The warden of the Gate-house, handsomely attired in velvet, had yeomen and groom-porters beneath him; while one of Sir Lionel's gentlemen, attended by a page, and followed by two servants

in rich liveries, rode forth mounted upon goodly steeds bearing the brand of their owner, being a naked dagger, with five gouts. Advancing to the principal court, after having completed his toilet, his amazement increased as he noticed that few of the wealthiest nobles of the land, with all the cumbrous magnificence and numerous household which they affected in their establishments, could surpass either in splendour or variety the retinue with which he was now surrounded, of whom the greater part wore swords like the retainers of a feudal baron. The steward of the household, in handsome robes, with gold chain and ruff, received him at the entrance of the great hall, which occupied the whole front of the first court. As he passed through the file of servants, yeomen and attendants, most of them in gorgeous liveries, and approached the dais and oriel-chamber, at the upper end of the hall, he observed that the walls were hung with armour of all descriptions, arrayed in fanciful shapes; among which he recognized, by its cognizance, the discarded helmet of Sir Giles, which had saved him from

many a perilous blow in the olden time, and for which, in an hour of evil omen, he had substituted the improved casque that had cost him his life. Although by no means very susceptible of regretful impressions, he could not forbear a sigh as he reflected upon the mode of his death, nor a latent feeling of indignation mixed with surprise, that another should thus have usurped his mansion, and eclipsed the splendour of its rightful owner.

On emerging from this apartment, and entering the Justice-Hall, he was enabled in some degree to account for the terror of the common people, who were more peculiarly liable to be arraigned at its bar, and brought in immediate collision with a soldier-magistrate, whose stern and rigorous dispensation of justice had, perhaps, contributed to his unpopularity, and aggravated the odium that attached to all supposed possessors of supernatural power. This scene of judicial authority must have indeed presented a dreadful spectacle to a culprit. The screen was garnished with corslets and helmets, gaping with open mouths, with coats of mail,

lances, pikes, halberds, brown-bills, batterdastors and buckles; while in order to inspire an awe that should come more home to the business and bosoms of offenders, a wooden tablet, hanging immediately before their eyes, presented them with sculptured representations of the stocks, the beadle's whip, the gaoler's chains, the prison itself with its massy portals and windowless walls, and finally the gallows, from which a criminal was dangling *in terrorem*. Such an apparatus, with a judge in the midst of it, who was supposed by the vulgar to be little better than a Rhadamanthus upon earth, must have been well calculated to overwhelm a guilty conscience, and even to appal an innocent one.

After passing through two other apartments of smaller dimensions, he was received by a chamberlain attended by an usher and two pages, who escorted him to the entrance of an anteroom, of which the portals had been no sooner thrown open, than Sir Lionel's domestic band of minstrels, consisting of cornets, shawms, a tabouret, lutes, rebecs and recorders, saluted him

with a short flourish, and he was at length ushered with all ceremony into the presence of the personage thus deeply entrenched in domestics. Sir Lionel, who was here attended only by the diminutive and deformed doctor, came forward to meet him, when Dudley, after a few words of common courtesy had been mutually exchanged, put into his hands the letter with which he was charged, and while Sir Lionel was perusing it, had full leisure for observing the figure before him. His stature would have appeared more than usually lofty and commanding, even when compared with the tallest of the common sons of men; but, when contrasted with the dwarfish figure by his side, its proportions seemed almost gigantic, and would probably have appeared still more so but for the exact symmetry of his limbs. In age he looked about forty-five. His forehead was bald, but the dark locks at the back of his head seemed still to curl naturally, and his long black beard, which he wore untrimmed, imparted a singular solemnity to his whole aspect. His large and penetrating dark eyes were surmounted by brows boldly

and yet delicately sculptured; his nose, inclining to the Roman, exhibited the same character, the nostrils were long and narrow, his teeth were perfect, and his features altogether might have been pronounced unexceptionably handsome, but that the derisive curl at the corners of his mouth occasioned a permanent though slight sneer in their expression, while the grisly scar on one of his temples, left by the wound he received in saving the life of Sir Giles Hungerford, communicated to his face, when viewed upon that side, something of a gaunt and terrific character.

The dark robes in which Dudley had beheld him, not long since, performing his mysterious gesticulations upon the terrace, no longer enshrouded him. Though still rather sombre in their hue, his present habiliments were of the richest materials, and admirably adapted for setting off the symmetry of his figure. His tunic of cinnamon colour, lined with cloth of silver, was gathered and drawn in at the small of the back, while the skirts were open and

flowing; his doublet was of the same colour as the tunic, with silver buttons; having beneath a jerkin of cloth of silver, which was only partially disclosed when he moved his beard. A tightly drawn leathern girdle, encircled with jewels, and supporting a costly sword, confined his waist; while the unbroken line of his lower garments, not puffed out into trunk-hose, but rather resembling a modern pantaloon, and constituting what was then called long slops, of dove colour, slashed at top, and drawn through with cloth of silver, allowed the length and symmetry of his limbs to be advantageously displayed. The roses of his shoes were fastened with a clasp of jewels in the centre, and Dudley observed that as his fingers moved in reading the letter, they sparkled with rings of diamond, amethyst, and ruby.

Although the communication he was perusing could not fail to be deeply interesting, and might, indeed, be said to implicate in a considerable degree his fate, he betrayed not the smallest symptom of emotion at its contents. His

features moved not; and his pale complexion received no accession of colour, as he deliberately folded up the paper, and said to his visitor—"Am I to conclude then from this letter that my right worthy and singular good friend is indeed no more?"

Dudley detailed the circumstances of his death, and of his honourable burial at Calais, when Sir Lionel exclaimed—"Alas the while! he was truly as hardy a knight as ever set spear in rest, but still so reckless, hot, and mettlesome in his valour, that he would spur to the vanward wherever there was clashing of swords, and make as largesse of his blood, as if it were fountain-water; so that we may rather marvel he should have lived so long, how much soever we may regret that he died so early. Left he any other vouchers, papers, or documents, than this letter?"

"None whatever," replied Dudley.

"It shall be my care that his dying purposes be fully executed," said the knight, putting the letter carefully into his pocket:—"and who were the witnesses to his unfortunate death?"

"I was the only person present when he yielded up the ghost," replied Dudley, "and to me only did he entrust the last wishes, which are contained in his letter to yourself."

"It is well, it is well," resumed Sir Lionel—"his will shall be done, and Heaven rest his soul!"

The diminutive personage in black was now introduced by the name of Dr. Wrench, and made his bow in silence. His ruff was stiffly starched, his beard cut square, like that of an Egyptian idol, his look betokened acuteness, or rather eagerness, and malignity, and his face exhibited that undefinable character, which enables you to pronounce at first sight that it belongs to a deformed person. In the conversation that ensued he took scarcely any part, turning up his little sharp eyes to Sir Lionel whenever he spoke, with an expression of abject deference that seemed but ill to accord with the natural waspishness of his features. Dudley was now called upon to give a more detailed account of the catastrophe of the adventurers, and of Sir Giles's wound and death, as well as of the occurrences he had met with on his jour-

ney to Somersetshire, a narrative that occupied some time; when feeling surprised that nothing should have been said respecting Cecil, he expressed a hope that he was in better health, and of more pleasant promise, than the last letters to Sir Giles had given reason to apprehend.

"God's pity! Master Dudley," exclaimed Sir Lionel—"we have not any warrant for a more favourable report, for in the fear of causing unhappiness to his father I have rather lagged behind the truth than gone beyond it. The youth is of puling health, and still more infirm of mind, and yet, weakwitted as he is, of a perverse and peevish will, when he is not lost in fits of silent sullen stupor. My learned friend Dr. Wrench, who was, or rather should have been, his tutor, has after patient toil foreborne his studies in despair; for it is vain to pour into a vessel that is too shallow to retain, and impossible to teach one who wants capacity to learn."

This statement was confirmed by the doctor in a few formal sentences, delivered in a most precise and mincing manner, wherein he declar-

ed his opinion that the young man was strictly a lunatic, having lucid intervals, but decidedly losing his intellects when under the influence of the moon; on which account he rather preferred that word to the more legal phrase *non compos mentis*, which he had applied to him when he first found him incapable of conjugating a Latin verb. Finally he declared that, according to his judgment, he was not in a safe state to go at large, but ought to be placed in temporary confinement, and some competent person be appointed, as directed by the seventeenth of Edward the Second, chap. 10, to take the management of his affairs; adding, that no one was so well qualified for this troublesome and painful office as Sir Lionel, though he feared he would hardly be prevailed upon to undertake it.

The Knight taking no notice of this intimation, Dudley declared that he was commissioned to deliver Sir Giles's dying blessing to his cousin, and expressed a hope that he should be allowed to see him for this purpose, as well as for the pleasure of commencing an acquaintance with him.

"Well-a-day!" said Sir Lionel, "you will little deem it a pleasure,"—and then, without giving a more direct pledge as to any interview, he immediately changed the subject by inquiring what stay he purposed making in Somersetshire, and claiming him as his guest until he should return to France, if such were his intention, or be called to other quarters. Dudley stated, that as he designed setting up an inscription in Glastonbury church, and suspending the ominous helmet, agreeably to his pledge to his uncle, he should be obliged to prolong his stay in the neighbourhood for some days, and would, therefore, gladly accept his proffered hospitality; which he did the more willingly, as his accommodation at the English inns, and more particularly at Sib Fawcett's, had by no means rendered him desirous of a protracted residence in any hostelry whatsoever. Exclusively of these alleged motives for accepting the invitation, he was determined if possible to form an acquaintance with his cousin, in whose fate he began to feel more deeply interested; nor would he have been at all satisfied to take his departure, without

having an opportunity of beholding the "fresh and stately beauty," for whose sake, principally, he had taken so much pains in decorating his person.

Professing great satisfaction at this arrangement, Sir Lionel called a page from the anteroom, and bade him tell Dame Fitzmaurice that a visitor who came to sojourn a few days at the Tor House, and who had brought important tidings from France, was waiting to be introduced to her. As she did not, however, make her appearance for some time, Dudley requested permission to speak to his servant, that he might dispatch him to Wells, for his valise and its appurtenances, as well as to remunerate the hostess for his accommodation. For this purpose he was ushered into a small room looking into the back court, which he had hardly reached, when from an adjoining apartment, of which the door was ajar, he heard a female voice exclaiming—"Gramercy! fellow, was ever such a tardy arras-mender as thou art? Is not Bell and the Dragon yet pieced

with a new tail, nor Susanna and the Elders made good in the torn border, nor the Prodigal Son patched in the foot?"

"No, my lady," replied a man's voice, "all are begun, though none are yet finished; but there is the new arras of imagery bordered with cucumbers, posies, and pomegranates, and that with beasts, birds, and a conduit."

"The new arras!" resumed the first voice; "am I to put up the new arras, thou waste-apace, before it has been rubbed with wormwood and bitter apples, to keep it from the moth? Go thy ways, sluggard, I will have no hangings since the old are in the loom, and the stranger shall sleep in the carved chamber. Why, Joan! Cicely! Meg! where are ye? look to the carved chamber that it be well besomed from cobwebs, strew it with rushes, and put up the dormy bed-curtains, paned with red and white. Tell the cook to mend the supper I had ordered, with a chicken callis, chaude-wardens, marchpane, almond-caudle, quince cakes, and pommecitron. Let her come to me in the

spicery for saffron to colour the venison frumenty, and saunders and liquorice-powder for the confections; and bid her send up the pewter garnish, for here will be a rare coil from Sir Lionel, an our visitor be of condition, and he see treen platters and wooden trenchers upon the board." The same voice gradually growing fainter, as the speaker retired, was for some time heard giving orders about parish-candle and wax-sizers, turnsole, blanch-powder and dates, fumatory, dandelion and hawthorn-water, and all the mysteries of the butlery, spicery, chandry, and still-room, until it became inaudible; and Dudley, concluding from the title applied to her by the dilatory arras-mender, that he had been unintentionally listening to Lady Fitzmaurice, was prepared to give her credit for being a most bustling and notable housewife, although he had little anticipated such a character in the spouse of the proud and ostentatious Sir Lionel.

Pierre, who shortly appeared, had already found time to ingratiate himself with some of the

numerous domestics, and no sooner learnt that they were to take up their quarters for the present at the Tor House, and quit the miserable *guinguette*, as he termed it, appertaining to Sib Fawcett, than he sang out, with great animation — *Allerte! Allerte! Allerte! disoit père Gregoire,*" and promised to start at an early hour on the following morning in execution of his orders. His master returned to the cedar-room, as the apartment was named in which he had been first introduced to Sir Lionel, and which he now found untenanted, the knight having retired with his little deformed companion, (who being no longer wanted as a tutor, had become his private secretary,) to consult upon matters, to which it would have been by no means expedient that the visitor should be privy. Dudley now observed, that the dark cedar pannels whence the room derived its name were interlined with texts of scripture, and moral scraps both in prose and verse, painted in black-letter, and in many places become illegible, either by lapse of time, or by the frequent

rubbing and polishing of the pannels. The furniture was massive and antique; tin sconces for holding lights were hung along the walls; the huge chimney-piece of sculptured oak displayed the Hungerford arms, bristling with weapons and other trophies of every description; and upon a ponderous oaken table in the centre of the room was lying a small printed formulary of the chapel-service for the day of the Assumption of our Lady; a book upon Judicial Astrology, with directions concerning the discovery of the Philosopher's Stone, and the Elixir Vitæ; and a Treatise on Hunting, Hawking, and Heraldry, by Dame Julian Berners, who, in Henry the Sixth's time, was obliging enough to teach young *gentlewomen* the divertisement of manning sparrow-hawks and merlines.* A manuscript, with the order of the Minstrel's Feast, and the Bull-chace to be observed on the morrow of the Assumption, com-

* She was prioress of the nunnery of Sopewell, and her book was printed in the neighbouring monastery of St. Albans, in 1481.

pleted the literary collection, which would not be deemed a very copious or entertaining one, were it to be displayed upon the loo-table of a modern drawing-room. It must be recollected, however, that in those days even personages of distinction had few other books of any sort; no newspapers, magazines, or reviews; no novels, circulating libraries, or literary correspondence. Shakspeare was yet unborn, and there was no Great Unknown to pour forth works of imagination and amusement with a talent so unrivalled as to absorb the admiration of all ranks, and all ages, and a fertility so inexhaustible as to supply them with a perpetual succession of novelty. For want of these resources, field-sports, tilts, and tournaments, were the only recreations of the gentlemen in time of peace; while the young ladies, whose hours were not fully occupied in domestic arrangements, or in working tapestry, might betake themselves to Dame Julian Berners, and receive lessons for manning sparrow-hawks and merlines.

After slightly glancing over this lady's vo-

lume, Dudley withdrew to one of the deeply pierced windows, which, commanding a fine view of the abbey, and disclosing to him the abbot's grange, now nearly burned to the ground, reminded him of the strange suspicions of the peasantry, as to Sir Lionel's having influenced the elements to its destruction, and determined him to mention the subject and observe the demeanour of his host, as soon as he should return to the apartment. This he did in a very few minutes, followed by the Doctor, when his visitor asked him whether he were aware that the abbot's grange had been struck by the lightning, and was to be seen burning from the window.

"I concluded it would be," replied Sir Lionel, calmly—"and have, therefore, never looked towards it. It irks me that the wind hath forced me to know of it; for so do I hold him in scorn, that I would not even smell the smoke, nor be soiled with the ashes, of any thing that once was his."

"May I inquire," resumed Dudley, "why you concluded it would be burnt?"

"Because I know that he can neither bribe nor intimidate Heaven, as he has too long done his fellow-creatures, and because I believe the hour of vengeance to be approaching. When a justly incensed king threatened a gluttonous predecessor of this abbot to burn his kitchen about his ears, the proud prelate traitorously defied him by building one of stone,* which he

* This tradition is still preserved in the neighbourhood of the Abbey, and the massive remains of the kitchen are pointed to in confirmation of its veracity. It is built upon a very curious construction. At the bottom it is square, and has a fire-place in each angle, with chimnies that open on the square part of the roof above. From this roof rises an octagonal pyramid, at the top of which is a kind of lantern, and within that another, in which was hung the bell, whose chime, in days of old, was the signal for collecting the poor people at the adjoining almonry, which now lies in ruins on the north side of the kitchen. The roof is supported by eight carved ribs, and there are as many funnels for letting out the steam through the windows. It is not unusual to adduce these enormous kitchens as evidences of the luxury and sensuality of the monks, without adverting to the necessity of such establishments, from the great numbers of the household, and the extensive charity and hospitality to which they ministered. These kitchens represented in a great degree our modern poor-rates, which were unknown before the Reforma-

declared all the wood of the royal forests should not be able to consume. But haughty, and almost omnipotent as they are, they cannot construct corn-stacks and hay-ricks of the same incombustible materials; nor am I without hopes that the present lord abbot, old as he is, may live long enough to see his stately abbey follow the fate of his grange.

Anxious to learn the cause of this decided enmity, and yet wishing to avoid the appearance of an impertinent curiosity, Dudley was considering how he might best obtain the information he wanted, by some oblique inquiry, when his design was frustrated by the entrance of Lady Fitzmaurice. She appeared to be about five years younger than her husband: in spite of the care and anxiety that characterised her features, they expressed great amiability, and the unaffected cordiality of her re-

tion. Church-ales, a Church-house in every parish, provided with spits, pots, and crocks, for provisions, a poor man's box in the churches and great inns, and above all, the doles at the religious houses, answered the purpose.

ception of him reconciled Dudley to a certain homeliness of manner, which, without descending to vulgarity, was still somewhat below the level of the rank she occupied. Even if her voice had not betrayed her, he would soon have recognized the careful housewife, whom he had overheard giving such minute directions in her domestic economy; the more especially as her dress, matronly and respectable as it was, was so inferior to the costly splendour of Sir Lionel's, that it gave her the appearance of being rather his housekeeper than his wife. Having learnt the death of Sir Giles before she entered the room, she almost immediately adverted to it, exclaiming with a melancholy voice and look —"Alas, alas! and is the good knight dead and gone? God rest his soul, and amen! for he was ever a kind friend to Sir Lionel, and a right noble gentleman he was to all the world. Beshrew the whole march of Calais, and a malison upon it, for though, as they tell me, it is but a lean and hungry country, it hath ever been soaked with as good English blood as if

it were as well worth fighting for as the Holy Land, and contained the sepulchre of our Lord. Well-a-day, well-a-day! I said yesterday, being the eve of the Assumption, that we should soon hear of some grievous death."

"Had you then any reason to anticipate the unfortunate fate of my uncle?" inquired Dudley, who recollecting Sir Lionel's statement about the abbot's grange, began to think that both parties had a strange power of foreseeing evil.

"Ay, troth, that had I," replied the lady: "for as I was sitting spinning with my maids under the chesnut-tree, in the buttery-yard, because of the heat, we heard a death-bell toll from the abbey, and straightway Joan, who is but a sighing and softhearted wench, struck up the old ballad—

Toll on the passing bell,
Ring out the doleful knell,
Let the sound my death tell,
For I must die;
There is no remedy,
For I must die!

And just as she ended we heard a cry from the kitchen, where a coffin had flown from the fire, and sorely burnt one of the turnspit-boys, by lodging in his worsted hose, which may well be deemed a judgment, for he is ever stealing the dripping; and lo you! Master Dudley, while the rogue was yet greeting, the raven that belongs to the buttery-yard, jumped upon the hatch, and croaked three times!"

"Never could anything more clearly prove that a brave English knight would be killed in France," exclaimed Sir Lionel, in a contemptuous tone.

"Since you are but freshly come from France," resumed the lady, not noticing this remark, and addressing Dudley, "you can resolve me truly whether they live so much cheaper than we, as I hear they do. God wot how we are to live in England, since things are thus run up. A fourteen pound stone of beef is not to be had under eight good pence, nor a leg of mutton for less than threepence, a bacon-hog costs ten shillings, and I have just paid a shilling

each for guinea pigs for the minstrels' dinner to-morrow. Flour too is again up, and none to be had under eightpence a bushel; and as to poultry, there is no getting a fat capon or hen under threepence, and a mallard is as dear, while they make it a favour to give you three or four dozen eggs for a shilling. Formerly, good ale at three halfpence a gallon would serve the turn, but now there must be a void of spices after dinner; and claret or brown bastard, at a shilling a gallon, is no longer good enough to serve with it; so we must e'en have muscadine or malmsey, at sixpence the quart, or sack at ninepence, or Candia and Romagna wines of which I wot not the value; nay, there be some that will fancy nothing but Hippocras with their spice."

"Twit! twit! my lady," exclaimed Sir Lionel, impatiently; "deem you that knights' esquires pass their life in the pantry and pitcher-house; or, that our guest has fallen in love with some kitchen malkin in France, and added up her market-book while she was ca-

bossing a boar's head, or putting a lemon into its mouth for a Christmas dinner?"

"Nay, nay, Sir Lionel, be not so overthwart, for as the gentleman is a traveller, I might well ween he would not pass through foreign countries without gleaning some useful lore."

Dudley expressed his regret, that he should have gathered no knowledge of this nature, for which he hoped to stand excused, as he had never kept house, but had generally led the soldier's life, and been provided for either, by the king, or the king's enemies.

"All which stands grievously in the way of gathering valuable information," continued the lady—"but it may have happed that you know something of the cost of servants, which are here a sore and evil drain upon the purse. Even at board-wages they must have twelvepence a week, and as to yearly wages, you cannot find a scullery wench, nor a rocker in the nursery, that looks not for twenty shillings; a groom will have as much; a footman, or falconer, forty; Sir Lionel's gentlemen five marks, or perhaps

ten nobles;"——and then, observing that her husband and his secretary had retired to the window, she came nearer to Dudley, and whispered in his ear, in a tone that expressed her sense of its exorbitancy—"The doctor has a hundred shillings!"*

Again Dudley was fain to express sorrow for his ignorance upon these essential points, when her ladyship good-naturedly consoled him by acknowledging that the generality of the young gallants now-a-days were equally deficient—"And there is little hope," she added, "that I should live to mend them, for, as the old saw goeth, what's bred in the bone will not out of the flesh, and

> None can a pitcher turn to a silver piece,
> Nor make a goodly silk of a goat's fleece;
> And hard is also to make withouten fail,
> A bright two-handed sword of a cow's tail——

though, gramercy! Master Dudley, I mean not to disparage you, but to let you know that I

* Roger Ascham had only 10*l.* a year pension for educating the Princess Elizabeth.

am a plain body, and make not a coop of my teeth when the words come clucking to my mouth."

"I feel honoured by such frankness," said Dudley—"nor is there any thing that likes me so well as a free-spoken sincerity." He looked towards Sir Lionel as he uttered these words, and recollected the character given of him by the friar, but the knight remained at the window whispering earnestly to his crooked secretary.

"And then," continued her ladyship, whose thoughts remained fixed upon the former subject, which was indeed generally uppermost in her mind—"what a waste is here for liveries, for every groom must forsooth be dizened after a fresh and lusty fashion, with sword by his side, and broidered or silver badge upon his arm; and Sir Lionel's gentlemen will have nought but velvet coats, what care they though Gill starve, and Jack of the Noke go bare, so they can strut in the great hall with forty or fifty shillings upon their back; for there is no plain velvet I trow under twenty shillings a yard, and as to three-

piled—would you believe me, Master Dudley, I paid four nobles for a French hood, and moreover, for the half yard and two nails, whereof this partlet is made."

Unfortunately for his further progress in the science of domestic economies and the prices of commodities, Dudley's attention was called off, and her ladyship's oration interrupted by the entrance of Miss Fitzmaurice, whom she introduced by the name of Mistress Beatrice, and whose appearance instantly confirmed Sib Fawcett's description, when she had termed her a fresh and stately beauty, though it did not so pointedly refute the imputation of a certain degree of hauteur. In many respects she bore a strong resemblance to her father. Like his, her stature was commanding, although from the exactness of its proportions she seemed to be very little above the standard height of beauty. Her large hazel eyes, with their dark and finely arched brows, were as majestic as Juno's; the outline of her face was equally noble; her teeth were faultless; but her mouth, although it had

not the derisive curl of Sir Lionel's, wore an expression the very reverse of meekness and humility, and which had at various times been termed a warranted consciousness of superior beauty, a look of becoming dignity, a slight tendency to superciliousness, or absolute hauteur, according to the impression it had made upon various observers. None, however, could deny that the general character of her face and figure was singularly striking and stately.

Nor had she neglected to assist nature with the embellishments of art, for the delay in her appearance had arisen solely from her sedulous attention to the toilet. In this she seemed to have studied the becoming rather than the fashionable, as if she felt entitled to set, rather than to follow, the mode. Her hair being parted in braids, so as to show her high forehead, was drawn through a crescent of pearls, and fell behind in short clustering ringlets. Neither ruff nor partlet concealed her neck and shoulders, whose fine form was becomingly and decorously visible, her tight boddice of russet damask being

fashioned in the modern style, although considerably longer in the waist, and pounced and garded all over with pearls and passement lace of silver. Demi-sleeves, fastened with knots of pearl upon the shoulder, displayed the symmetry of her arms as well as the richness of her bracelets; and her kirtle, of the same material as the boddice, was tastefully decorated with flowers of beaten silver and pearl bows. This attire, which would now be deemed over-fine, unless for some extraordinary occasion, was in those days of greater splendour nothing more than customary; such indeed was Sir Lionel's taste for state and costliness, that he often reproached his lady with the homeliness of her appearance, and generally admired his daughter in proportion as her dress approached to the magnificent.

Never laughing, and seldom smiling, his face rarely varied from its habitually derisive expression, its chief betrayal of emotion being confined, however singular it may sound, to his nostrils, which were dilated in moments of passion, and drawn slightly upwards under the

influence of complacent feelings. Such was the expression they now assumed, as he surveyed his daughter with a proud satisfaction, and, leaving his secretary in the window, came forward to welcome her and mingle in the conversation, which he had previously appeared to consider beneath his attention. Conscious of her beauty, and by no means disposed to think meanly of her talents, Beatrice enjoyed that perfect self-possession which, enabling its owner to speak with fluency and animation, often conceals ignorance, and is even occasionally mistaken by superficial observers for knowledge. She questioned Dudley respecting the masques, pageants, and balls, at which he had been present in France, inquired what celebrated beauties he had seen, and, exacting a minute description of dresses, appeared delighted at his competency to furnish full information upon this point, and not less struck with the taste he had exhibited in his own attire. Much as her face resembled her father's, she was so far from sharing his

inflexibility of feature and expression, that her countenance was as the dial-plate of her heart. She had no need of dissimulation, and was too proud to descend to it. As Sir Lionel interrogated his visitor touching some of his old companions in arms, and their doings in France, her eyes kindled at the relation of any instances of personal prowess, or splendour and magnificence of living; while at any example of unmanly bearing, or meanness of spirit, she assumed a look of ineffable scorn, which betrayed strong passion, and during its continuance might be even said to impeach her claim to feminine beauty.

In the conversation that ensued, Lady Fitzmaurice took little part, except to ejaculate about the expense of the pageants, or to inquire the price of any article belonging to the wardrobe or culinary department, that happened to be incidentally mentioned; the doctor was generally silent, only once interfering, to correct the pronunciation of a Latin word, but watching whatever fell from the lips of Sir Lionel with a

look of profound homage; the remainder of the party, however, required no assistance to keep up the spirit of the conversation, which was maintained with undiminished interest until the band of music in the adjoining apartment suddenly struck up a flourish, and several servants entering, announced that supper was served.

"Saint Mary bless us!" exclaimed her ladyship—"the chicken callis will hardly be done, and it cannot surely be six o'clock. Hark! well it is six, by my faith, for I hear the abbey-bell tolling for evensong." So saying, she headed the party as it was formally ushered by the chamberlain into the supper-room, where numerous pages and servants in rich liveries were stationed, while the musicians, who were provided with forms at the upper end, played at intervals during and after the repast. On the table Dudley recognized the additions which his arrival had occasioned, and respecting which he had heard such particular directions given, although he would have considered the meal

more than handsome enough for the occasion, without these supplemental luxuries. Her ladyship appeared rather embarrassed and overwhelmed by the state in which she sate; but Beatrice, he observed, exacted her full share of service and attention, not suffering any omission of minute homage, and once sharply rebuking the page behind her chair for some trifling neglect. After the doctor had pronounced a Latin grace, not a word more came out of his mouth, although a portion of every dish went into it, and he never took his eyes from his plate except when he heard a word fall from his patron. As Dudley gazed with admiration upon Sir Lionel's lofty figure, flowing beard, and splendid dress, while he sate surrounded by a retinue of rich liveries, doing the honours of his table with a graceful stateliness, or giving orders to the musicians when to strike up a toccata and when to cease, he was lost in astonishment, not only at the magnificence of the knight's establishment, but that he should appear to be as completely in his native element, as if he

had been born to all the pompous observances of nobility, if not of royalty itself.

"If it would like you better, Master Dudley," said her ladyship, observing that he made little progress with his meal, "to taste a sliver from a venison-pasty, there is still some left of a rare one that we had for dinner, which I can vouch for as a toothsome one and a good."

With a distasteful shrug, that betrayed its French origin, he declined the invitation, observing that such substantial fare was held in small repute among the cooks of Gascony, and at the Norman tables.

"Nay then," resumed his hospitable hostess, "you get not such ale across the Channel as our Somersetshire lads can brew, I warrant me; and if you ever tasted a better sop than this, my name is no longer Madge." So saying, she turned up a tankard that she had just emptied, and letting the toast within fall upon a trencher, handed it across to him. Dudley mastered his repugnance as well as he could, and thanked her for the kind offer, but declared that he had been too long accustomed to claret, refreshed

with ice or snow, to be yet reconciled to malt-brewage.

"And what be the favourite dishes abroad?" inquired her ladyship; "for I would fain see you feed after a lustier fashion, if I knew the fancy of your palate."

"We have mushrooms and caveare, snails and frogs," replied Dudley, with an affectation not uncommon in the travelled gallants of that æra.

"Ods-pittikins, man!" cried Lady Fitzmaurice; "snails and frogs! what vermin is this for a Christian to eat? Truly, if this be sooth, an English dog lives better than a French duke. Ye must be right glad to be among us again, for ye see no such nastiness, I promise ye, at the Tor House."

Beatrice rebuked her tartly for her ignorance of foreign delicacies, and turned the conversation from a subject, on which she knew, by experience, that the dame would continue to dilate so long as there remained any culinary matter to discuss, or a single auditor to be found.

At the conclusion of the repast the table was

cleared, and the surnap being placed upon the lower end of the board, was drawn along it by two of the servants, and uncovered to display its contents of fruit and confections; when pages again handed round ewers and napkins for the company to wash themselves, as they had done before the meal, an indispensable process, at a period when, amidst all the luxury and costliness of the table, so humble and necessary an article as a fork had not yet been introduced. Sir Lionel having for some time mingled in the conversation, with greater familiarity than was his wont, withdrew with his dwarfish secretary, leaving Dudley to entertain her ladyship and the beautiful Beatrice, which commission, so far at least as the latter was concerned, he undertook with the most ardent alacrity. In spite of his disdain for every thing English, he had been instantly struck by her distinguished and dignified air, and although there were several points of her dress which he considered in decidedly bad taste, because not in the French fashion, he felt a vehement desire to ingratiate

himself into her favour. It is only characteristic of that semi-barbarous æra, that, in pursuance of this intention, he should seize an opportunity of informing her he had killed three men in single duels, two of them his friends, and all three his countrymen, whose names, as well as the causes of quarrel, and the nature of their fatal wounds, he minutely detailed; not only without compunction, but with an evident feeling of complacency and triumph. Besides these exploits, he mentioned several rencounters, wherein he had been a joint actor with others, and of which the results had been little less sanguinary. Nor did he exaggerate in these statements, for he had long taken lessons from the celebrated Vincentio, and, young as he was, was considered one of the most expert and successful swordsmen at Calais. When it is recorded that Beatrice listened to these revolting details with pleasure and admiration, it is but justice to add that there was not, perhaps, a single young and noble damsel in England who would not have done the same; so

powerful is the example of kings, and the influence of fashion and custom, in utterly searing the heart, and perverting the judgment, even of females not otherwise deficient in sensibility and intelligence. In viewing the matter thus lightly, she had also the sanction of her own father, who had sacrificed three of his neighbours to his projects of aggrandisement.

The celebrated meeting in the Field of Gold Cloth, of which, as already stated, Dudley had been a witness, afforded him a subject of conversation, which had not yet lost any of its attraction to knight, dame, or damsel, although several years had elapsed since it occurred, and various details of its magnificence had been published. It may be worthy of notice, as a proof of the insufficiency and quick exhaustion of sensual and external pleasure, that all the delights of this nature, which the wealth of two powerful monarchs could command, or the ingenuity of their subjects could invent, were found to be utterly worn out in a few days. The English were said to carry their manors,

and the French their forests, upon their backs, but when tilts and tournaments, balls and banquets, masks and pageants, when public pomp and private vanity had all been displayed in succession, nothing but a sickening *Da Capo* was left, and the two young kings were fain to part, because they had met for the avowed purposes of pleasure, and there was no longer any pleasure to be found. Although the chronicler of this meeting expressly says—"well was that man rewarded that could bring anythyng of likyng or pleasure," nothing intellectual seems to have entered into the composition of these gorgeous inanities, unless we may dignify with that name the pageants, which were made to convey elaborate and obscure allegories, and the punning devices and quibbling hieroglyphics, anagrams, and letters, with which the knights were covered, until they became so many walking, or rather riding, riddles. Dudley described the alarm of his countrymen, when the French, by whom they were much outnumbered at this interview, suddenly broke

from their appointed station, and ran among the English court and nobility, who, in the groundless apprehension of treachery, stood fast to their array. To the English monarch, he assigned the palm of superior prowess, as well as of personal comeliness, over all competitors, while he did full justice to the valour and noble bearing of Francis, declaring that he had been accurately described by Hall as, "a goodly prince, stately of countenance, merry of cheer, brown-coloured, great eyes, high nosed, big lipped, fair breasted and shoulders, small legs and long feet." But as the same minute chronicler had asserted that ten men's wits could scarce declare the "apparel of the ladies, their rich attires, their sumptuous jewels, their diversities of beauties, and their goodly behaviour from day to day," Dudley modestly declined a task to which an individual could only do a tithe of justice. He contented himself, therefore, with describing the presents which he had seen the royal brothers exchange upon parting, Henry giving to Francis a collar of precious

stones, called balastes, garnished with great diamonds and pearls, which the French monarch returned by a bracelet of rich jewels and rare. In conclusion, he stated that many knights and fair ladies, that came to see the nobleness, were well content, for want of better accommodation, to lie in hay and straw; while he abundantly confirmed the assertion of the chronicler that, "as the conduit of the gate ranne wyne alwaies, there were vacaboundes, plowmen, laborers, and of the braggery, wagoners and beggers, that for drunkennes lay in routes and heaps."

Producing a little ivory table-book from his pocket, the puny precursor of our solid and multifarious albums, he now entertained his auditors with a variety of riddles, subtleties, and devices, which had been produced at the different banquets, and of which he had diligently taken note at the time. As this sort of recreation was in high vogue at the Court, Beatrice indulged in it with great interest and alacrity, until Lady Fitzmaurice reminded her that it

was time to bid their guest good night, when she retired not a little delighted with their handsome and vivacious visitant. Dudley was now ushered with great ceremony to the carved bed-room, whose oaken panels displayed the family arms, badges, bearings, and devices, with the old motto, "*Esperance en Dieu ma comforte.*" Committing himself to the dormy bed-curtains, paned with red and white, much more complacently than he had done on the night before, to Sib Fawcett's poledavy hangings in the cubiculum dignified by the name of the Horn Chamber, he remained for some time pondering upon the cause of that general suspicion and evil reputation that attached to his host, in whom he had hitherto seen nothing to warrant such dark surmises. His pantomimic manœuvrings upon the terrace during the storm remained indeed unexplained, and Dudley was at a loss to understand the pecuniary sources that could supply so princely an establishment; but although the knight's manner was stately, it was urbane and courteous. His promises were fair, Dudley's recep-

tion had been friendly, and he formed no inauspicious auguries as to the issue of his mission. Perhaps the charms of Beatrice, which had made a deeper impression than any he had hitherto experienced, tended to prepossess him in favour of Sir Lionel, towards whom he resolved, at least, to exercise a dispassionate judgment, unprejudiced by vulgar credulity, or priestly superstition. With this candid determination he fell asleep, and no sooner forgot the father than he began to dream of the daughter, with whom he had enjoyed so long and animated a colloquy;—but it is not in our power to record that his thoughts ever travelled so far as the neighbouring county of Wilts, or reverted for a single moment to the daughter of Sir Eustace Poyns, although he was formally betrothed to her, and the young lady was probably expecting with the greatest impatience the arrival of her affianced husband.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Gentle and mild, though sorely tried,
His genius thwarted, and denied
Its full expansion;
The youthful lord of wide domains,
Imprisonment and scorn sustains
In his own mansion.

We hope it will not derogate from the delicacy of the ladies, nor be considered an impeachment of Sir Lionel's taste and hospitality, when we state that the family party and their visitor sate down on the following morning, to a breakfast consisting of a chet loaf and a manchet, a chine of beef, and a gallon of ale; such being the exact fare allotted for the same repast to six maids of honour, at the luxurious court of the then reigning monarch. In meals as well

as manners a mixture of coarseness and magnificence characterized the æra: although there was a cupboard of plate of five stages, standing in one corner of Sir Lionel's room, these homely viands were served in dishes of pewter; while numerous servants in gorgeous liveries paraded backwards and forwards with treen platters, and wooden trenchers. Not anticipating an æra when it would be deemed *de la dernière infamie* to descend to malt-liquor even at dinner, or to sip any thing for breakfast less fragrant and refined than coffee, chocolate, or bohea, the party recreated themselves very contentedly with the breakfast we have described, conversing during its progress upon the ceremonial of the minstrel's feast, which was to be that day celebrated at the Tor House. Sir Lionel expressed his regret that such festivities should be held in the mansion, so immediately after learning the death of its regretted owner; but he stated it to be an annual festival and religious ceremony invariably observed on the morrow of the Assumption; one that was strictly enjoined by the te-

nure of certain lands granted to the Abbey of Glastonbury in former times, by the Hungerfords; and at which his presence as representative of the lord of the manor, would be indispensably required. The tenantry, the society of minstrels, and the lower orders in general, looked forward, he said, with so much expectation to this yearly jubilee, that he could not resolve to disappoint them upon the very eve of their enjoyment, or he protested that he would, under the influence of his own melancholy feelings, have been better pleased to countermand the festival until the following season.

"Bone Deus, bone Deus!" Sir Lionel, exclaimed her ladyship—"that would little speed us now, when all the gear has been provided, and the steward's purse has cast its calf. Marry, I would rather than a pocket full of ruddocks,* that our guest had come some days sooner, so we might have forgone this coil and waste, and all for a rabblement of scrapers of rebecks,

* A cant term for gold coin.

shawm-blowers, and vagabond pipers. A foul evil upon the rogues that worry other people's ears to please their own mouths, and liking no music themselves so well as that of the cup and can, are to be seen sprawling in the sun under every ale-pole in the county."

"Nay, nay, my good Madge," said Sir Lionel, —"hold not these gentle minstrels too cheap: their sport is but of a day, and to-morrow thou shalt again sit spinning with thy maids, and sing them, an thou wilt, the ballads of the 'Mustard Tart,' 'Colin Clout,' and 'John Yea.'"

"Troth! and better too than to hear these swilling catterwaulers, when our stoutest two-penny ale dances in their noddles, bawling their 'Rumble down, tumble down, hey go, now, now!' Hold them too cheap forsooth! Wot you, Sir Lionel, how much we have disbursed already for this pestilent feast in chines and giggots, flecks and gammons, brawn and sheep's haunches? to say nothing of geese-pasties and pudding-pies, and I know not how many hoggets of ale beside?"

"Truly that is a question which it may better become my steward to resolve," replied Sir Lionel, with his usual derisive expression.

"Alack! alack! it is well to have a noble heart, and a stomach that cares not for cost, but it is bad to feast to-day and fast to-morrow. The best steward is the master, and the safest coffer his own pouch. It is better to borrow of back and belly, who will not ask us for it again, than to owe to creditors who may cry 'pay' in our ears, when we want to go to sleep. In good sooth, at this rate golden royals had need to grow like mushrooms."

"You forget, madam," said Beatrice reddening with vexation, at this exposure of her ladyship's homely manners—"that these kitchen-secrets can be of very little entertainment to our guest."

"Sooth, child, and so I did, and by my holidame, I crave his pardon, and my dear Sir Lionel's too, if I have offended him; though he knows it is but my fear and fondness, if I

ever make bold to question his good pleasure." She looked at her husband as she spoke, with an expression of submissive affection; but observing that he turned aside without noticing it, she heaved a sigh, and exclaiming to Beatrice in a lower tone—"Would I had never said word about this unlucky feast, for I had rather bite off my tongue than anger him," she walked towards the door. Observing, however, one of the servants in the court as she passed an open window, she called out "Robin! Robin—tell Cicely to come to me in the scullery with a stone cruse, that I may give out the mustard;" —and then forgetting her recent wish in the sudden regret at this fresh expense, she again turned to Sir Lionel, exclaiming—"why, the very mustard, which is up to two-pence farthing the gallon, will be no scurvy charge, for these hot-mouthed varlets will touch no meat without it; and then, a pize upon 'em, they must drink double to cool themselves"—with which words she quitted the apartment.

Sir Lionel then, observing that he must shortly

prepare to accompany the minstrels, invited Dudley to join the party and view the procession, as well as the sports and ceremonies of the day, a proposal to which he acceded with the greater alacrity when he understood that he was to have Beatrice for a companion, and heard her, as she retired from the apartment to equip herself, order her palfrey to be in readiness. As he learnt that an hour or more would intervene before the assemblage, he promised to meet the rest of the party at the appointed time, and resolved to take a previous survey of the house, the antique character of which, and the numerous black-letter inscriptions upon the walls, had excited his curiosity. In execution of this purpose he wandered from one room to another, until he found himself in the great hall, where his attention was for some time engaged by the old-fashioned armour and weapons fantastically arranged along the walls, although he could not examine them so closely as he wished, on account of the tables which were prepared on either side for the coming feast.

While thus occupied, his attention was attracted by the loud barking of a dog, which sounded from above him, and concluding that it proceeded from one of the round towers that flanked the front of the great court, and formed the extremity of the hall, he determined to ascend it if possible, not only to liberate the animal, which seemed to be somewhere confined, but with the hope of obtaining a better view of the surrounding country from the eminence. On gaining the foot of the tower, however, he found that the door leading into it, and which, from its being covered with large nails and bosses of iron, apparently formed the entrance to some place of security, was carefully fastened with a large padlock. None of the servants being at that moment in the way, to answer interrogatories, he was about to abandon his intention, and saunter through the porch towards the causeway, when it occurred to him that the interior of the corresponding tower might not be equally inaccessible. In this expectation he was not disappointed; the door

was open, and he immediately began to ascend the winding stone stair-case that led up to the top of the building. At successive stages there were small low rooms, lighted by loop-holes, which exhibited no marks of recent occupation, and he therefore continued mounting, till he came to a chamber in which a window had been pierced, looking inwards over the roof of the great hall. If it had ever been provided with a casement, it had now fallen out, a circumstance that immediately enabled him to perceive the dog, by whose loud and impatient barking he had been induced to climb thus far. It was a beautiful white spaniel, not in confinement, as he had imagined, but exerting its utmost strength in a succession of the most vigorous leaps against the opposite tower, and still renewing them, although, after clinging for a moment to a slightly projecting stone, it fell repeatedly backwards upon the roof. What was Dudley's surprise, when, upon looking up to ascertain the object which the dog was so anxious to reach, he beheld two arms pro-

truded from a grated window at some height, and endeavouring, but ineffectually, to catch hold of the poor animal as it sprang against the wall.

A few minutes' observation convincing him that he could safely walk along within the parapet that stretched from one tower to another, Dudley jumped from the window, as the dog had probably done before him, and advanced towards the opposite building, where the spaniel continued so eagerly leaping and barking as not to notice his approach. Dudley's attention was equally absorbed by the figure at the window, for his previous surprise was exalted to astonishment, when, upon coming nearer, he recognized the identical youth whom he had encountered in Wokey Hole, and to whose aid he was indebted for his extrication from a most perilous predicament. He could not be mistaken in the mild, sickly, and melancholy character of the countenance which the torch had then so distinctly revealed to him, although he now observed, that, notwithstanding the boyishness of

his dress, the figure before him was not quite so youthful as he had first conjectured.

Deeming that the most acceptable service he could render, in the first instance, would be to effect a meeting between these two friends, for such they appeared to be, he took up the dog, and lifting him as high as he could, enabled him to spring from his arms so as to be caught by his master, who, with some little difficulty, and a face suddenly changed into an expression of delight, at length drew him between the bars. Dudley would hardly have imagined it possible that the scene which ensued could be so moving. Joy, tenderness, and affection, were distinctly legible in the poor animal's face as it moaned, and whined, and licked its master's cheeks, and then buried its head in his master's bosom; while he observed with a surprise, not unmingled with contempt, that, as the youth caressed and bent over his recovered favourite, he let fall several tears upon its neck. "You seem overjoyed at having your four-footed companion restored to you," he at length

exclaimed, after having for some time watched their mutual endearments, in silence.

"Well may I be so," replied the youth in a melodious voice, "for he is the only friend I have upon earth." He sighed as he spoke, and his countenance again saddened.

"May I inquire," said Dudley, "why you are thus imprisoned?"

"Because I ran away and hid myself in Wokey Hole."

"And why may you not wander thither, or whithersoever it likes you?"

"Because, as they tell me, I am sometimes quite crazy, and always half-witted."

Finding that he was not recognized, Dudley informed him that he was one of the strangers whom he had so opportunely supplied with a torch in Wokey Cave, and asked why he had not answered them when they had first shouted for assistance.

"I thought I heard my pursuers," replied the youth, "and it was not until I had ascertained you to be strangers, by your voices and conversation, that I chose to reveal myself."

Dudley next described the strange white object they had seen in the water, of which he professed himself anxious to obtain some explanation.

"That must have been my poor dog Snowdrop, whom you have so kindly restored to me, and whose large dark eyes might well startle you as they gleamed in that dim recess. Following me along the narrow passage I had discovered to an inner cave, he fell into the water, and was at first carried down by the stream, but soon swam back. I am sorry he occasioned so much alarm to one who seems to be so good and gentle, though if you be so in real sooth, I know not how you came here."

"I owe you much," said Dudley, "for the important service you have already rendered me, and would gladly, if you will allow me, become your friend."

"My friend! my friend!" exclaimed the youth, clasping his hands passionately together, "Oh no, no, no! I have no friend in the wide world but Snowdrop; every body else despises and shuns the poor simple Cecil Hungerford."

"I suspected that I was talking to the son of my valiant uncle Sir Giles Hungerford, though I little thought to find him so unworthily imprisoned in his own mansion, and I fear you will hardly receive me as the friend I wish to be considered, when I commence our acquaintance by conveying to you the most doleful intelligence you have ever heard. Prepare for bitter tidings, and hate me not for bringing them, for alas! I am bound to tell you that your brave father is dead."

"Dead!" exclaimed the youth, while his countenance flared up with a transient joy, "I am glad of it! I am glad of it! but hark! hark! Captain Basset is coming; I know it by the growling of my dog. Away, away, for God's sake! I shall be punished if I am discovered talking to you." At these words he waved his hand rapidly as if to motion his visitant to an immediate retreat, and instantly disappeared from the window.

Fearful of exposing his unfortunate cousin to some fresh severities, Dudley obeyed the signal

and retired, at once bewildered and indignant at what he had seen. His first impression had been a decided conviction that Cecil was in perfect possession of his faculties; that the most dark and sinister motives had originated the story of his imbecility; and that nothing but the violence and cruelty of an usurper had occasioned his unwarrantable confinement. Although shaded with melancholy, his countenance betokened amiability and a fine intelligence; from his singing in the cave, it was incontestable that his ear was as accurate as his voice was melodious; his conversation in the commencement had been rational and consistent: but to Dudley's apprehensions there was an effeminate, not to say a diseased sensibility, in his weeping over his dog, especially when he contrasted it with his unnatural exclamation of gladness at his father's death, which, as he was evidently not deficient in feeling, could only be attributed to a disordered intellect. Persons afflicted with a partial aberration, or occasional imbecility of mind, would, he well knew, converse for a time with

perfect self-possession, and then unaccountably deviate into incoherence and fatuity, a class of sufferers in which he was disposed to place this unhappy youth; but still the mode and place of his confinement were unwarrantable, and the apparent severity of his treatment (for he talked of being punished for merely conversing with a stranger) was even more inexcusable.

If the stern wages of war had somewhat blunted his feelings of humanity, Dudley's indignation against the oppressor supplied its place; his pride, too, inflamed his sense of the outrageous injustice exercised against one who was his cousin; who was in some degree a claimant upon his protection, in consequence of the pledge he had given to his father; who was young and helpless, and the indisputable lord and owner of the whole mansion, in an obscure nook of which he was thus secretly immured. Above all, when he reflected that Sir Lionel, who had already usurped the estates, to which the removal of Cecil would give him a legal title under the will of Sir Giles, was universally

considered a dangerous and desperate man, ready to summon the powers of Hell to his assistance, rather than fail in his designs, he saw that there was not less reason to suspect his treachery, than to dread his resentment if he attempted to counteract it. Cecil, moreover, was under age; Sir Lionel was his legal guardian; if his cousin's perfect sanity were established, it would not withdraw him from the suspicious power of his present custodian;—if his imbecility were proved, it might only throw him the more inextricably into his clutches, and enable him to fasten at leisure the snares and fetters, which he seemed already preparing to coil and clasp around his victim. Caution was, therefore, doubly necessary, both on his cousin's account and his own; the least precipitation might occasion some atrocity to be perpetrated towards the former, and the numerous warnings he had received against Sir Lionel convinced him that he himself would stand in no little peril should he hazard any open arraignment of his conduct. The dis-

covery he had made rendered it more than ever desirable that Sir Giles's dying wishes should be accomplished, by removing his unfortunate son from his present situation, and placing him with the Abbot of Glastonbury, who had always enjoyed an unblemished reputation for piety, virtue, and learning: by the exercise of a little prudence and delay he was not without hopes of succeeding in an object which he felt it to be his duty never to abandon; but for the present he resolved to temporize, to be wary and watchful, to endeavour to gain an insight into Cecil's real state, to fathom, if possible, Sir Lionel's designs, and to govern his subsequent conduct in opposing them by the discoveries he should make. Deeply revolving these plans in his head, he walked slowly back to the dwelling-apartments of the house, as the time was now nearly arrived, which had been appointed for commencing the sports and ceremonies attendant upon the Minstrels' Feast.

## CHAPTER IX.

What impious man is this—what Cain
Abhorr'd of God and man—whose reign
On guilt is founded?
At whose accursed presence fall
The symbols of our faith—and all
Start back astounded!

THE same Sir Nicholas Hungerford of the olden time, for whose soul Friar Frank had been appointed to say a mass upon Teneber Wednesday, as already recorded, having subscribed the assignment of certain lands to the Abbey of Glastonbury, on an Assumption day, had chosen to connect that conveyance with the minstrels' feast, and to make the tenure dependent upon certain conditions to be observed by all future abbots. If the devout Sir Nicholas did not

upon other occasions evince more humanity than he displayed in framing these regulations, he probably did quite right in instituting these masses for the repose of his soul; for the form of the tenure ran thus—"After dinner all the minstrels shall repair to the abbey-gate of Glastonbury, without any manner of weapons, attending the turning out of the bull, which the bailiff of the manor is obliged to provide, and is there to have the tips of his horns sawed off, his ears and tail cut off, his body smeared all over with soap, and his nose blown full of beaten pepper. Then the steward shall cause proclamation to be made, that all manner of persons, except minstrels, shall give way to the bull and not come within forty feet of him, at their own peril, nor hinder the minstrels in their pursuit of him. After which proclamation, the abbot's bailiff shall turn out the bull among the minstrels, and if any of them can cut off a piece of his skin, before he runs out of the island of Avalon, or district of the abbey, then he is the King of Music's bull; but if he get out of the

island sound and uncut, then he is the Lord Abbot's again.

"If the bull be taken, and a piece of him cut off, then he shall be brought to the bailiff's house, and there collared and dressed, and so brought to the bull-ring in the High-street of Glastonbury, and there baited with dogs, the first course in honour of the king of music, the second in honour of the lord abbot, the third of the town, and if more, for divertisement of the spectators; and after he is baited, the king of music may dispose of him as he pleases."

This barbarous custom, the present abbot, a virtuous and humane man, had strenuously endeavoured to abolish, proposing to offer to the minstrels three times the value of the bull if they would forego their annual cruelties. But the prior, and father Barnabas, the sub-prior, and the almoner, and the precentor, all grave and reverend clerks, took prodigious alarm at the very mention of the proposition, and convened a meeting for the express purpose of opposing it, wherein it was very profoundly and

cogently urged, that those were no times for departing from the venerable institutions handed down to them by their ancestors;—that as the abbey had regularly flourished and increased since the commencement of this laudable practice, they could not do better than leave well alone;—and, that at such a revolutionary æra, when rebels and atheists were trying to sap the foundations of the church, nothing could be more dangerous than to countenance any unprincipled innovations. Having adduced other arguments, equally conclusive, and thrown out various insinuations against newfangled doctrines, and those who make a morbid humanity a cover for the most sinister designs, they drew up their reasons for dissent in great form, and presented them to their superior; who, however he might condemn the practice, thought it better to allow it, than to introduce discord and disunion into his abbey. To this he was the more strongly influenced, as he justly piqued himself upon the harmony of his establishment, and the good conduct of all its members; and was moreover aware, that as the suppression of

the esser monasteries had already paved the way for an attack upon the greater ones, he could not be too guarded in preserving the good name for superior concord and decorum, which his abbey had hitherto retained.

The ceremony accordingly proceeded conformably to the intentions of its pious and humane institutor, and the minstrels of the Honour, joined by those belonging to the Tor House, formed a procession, at the head of which was Sir Lionel on horseback, while Dudley and Beatrice, with a numerous train of servants and others, brought up the rear. In this manner they proceeded to the bailiff's house, where the king of music's steward commanded an oyez to be made by one of the band, as crier of the court, ordering all minstrels within the Honour to appear and do their suit and service, on such pain and peril as the court should inflict for their default. A jury of the chief minstrels was then impanneled, to whom the steward delivered a charge in commendation of the ancient science of music, showing what admirable effects it has produced, what kings

and noble persons have been professors of it, what manner of persons the professors ought to be, and to admonish them to choose good and skilful officers for the ensuing year. A second oyez was then made, with a proclamation, that if any persons could inform the court of fault or offence committed by any minstrel within the said Honour since the last court, rendering him unworthy of his profession, they were then to come forth and be heard.

For the honour of the Honour, and of the musical brotherhood in general, we are happy to record that there were no complaints against scrapers of catgut, blowers of shawms, or beaters of taborets; so that the court, after going through some other customary forms, elected their king for the ensuing year, discussed a light refection of cakes and ale, furnished by the new monarch, and then prepared themselves with great alacrity for the most important feature of the day—the bull-chase. When Dudley understood the cruel nature of this proceeding, he hardly expected Miss Fitzmaurice would

wish to be a spectator of it; but so far from any compunctious visitings upon the subject, she declared that it generally proved excellent sport, and galloped gaily to the spot where the devoted animal was to be turned out. In the assemblage collected to witness the start, Dudley recognized the bearward, whom he had encountered at Hollowstone point, as well as his old acquaintance Will Mattock, and such a ruffian rabblement as might be deemed better adapted to the rough and sanguinary exhibition they came to witness, than the young and beautiful Beatrice. Her indifference to the sufferings of the animal, her enjoyment even of the sport it afforded, did not emanate from hardness of heart, so much as from a want of reflection, and a general impression that whatever ministered to the pleasure of Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice's daughter, must, as a matter of course, be a justifiable recreation. Nay, when Dudley, in the hope of extracting some remarks about Cecil, ventured to regret his absence, she was provided with a sneer against those who affected

or possessed a morbid sensibility, and spoke with a contemptuous pity of his poor cousin, as one who was ten times more girlish than herself, who condemned all field-sports as barbarous, and could hardly endure the sight of blood without fainting.

Dudley would fain have pressed this theme, although the tone of her voice, not less than her words, evinced that she considered his "poor cousin" a mere object of compassion; but the bull, maddened by the torture to which he had been previously subjected, was now turned out, and dashed across the meadows with a frightful impetuosity, while Beatrice, giving her palfrey the rein, and disregarding the regulation that prohibited approach to any but the minstrels, galloped close behind him. Not less expert as a horsewoman, than fearless of the infuriated animal, she skilfully avoided him when he turned round, renewed the pursuit when he again rushed forward, and keeping ever upon his track, seemed to be animated by the bellowing of the beast, and the shouts of his still more

brutal assailants. As we will do our readers the justice to believe that not even the grace, beauty, and courage of Miss Fitzmaurice, eminent as they were, can reconcile them to the unfeminine occasion selected for their display; as it pains us, moreover, to exhibit in an unamiable point of view, one who had many redeeming traits in her character; and finally, as we have a profound abhorrence from all field-sports, whether the object hunted be a roaring bull, or a terrified hare, we shall beg leave to pass over the remainder of this morning's sport, (as hunters and baiters term their barbarities,) and ask permission to rejoin the party, when they again met in the great hall of the Tor House to enjoy the minstrels' feast.

To allow time for the business and pleasures of the morning, the dinner had been protracted to the unusually late hour of two o'clock, and Lady Fitzmaurice, anxious to combine plenty with economy, had commenced, upon the system of the modern French restaurateurs, by allowing her guests *pain à discretion*; a goodly loaf

being placed beside each trencher. The meats consisted of substantial joints, beef and pork forming the staple, because their price had been fixed by Act of Parliament at a halfpenny a pound, while mutton and veal, which by the same statute were ordered to be sold at half a farthing more, were distributed with a proportionally sparing hand. Flecks of brawn and gammons, were, however, not stinted, because they occasioned a considerable time in their discussion, and saved other viands; while geese, pasties, and pudding-pies, being also considered potent sedatives to the appetite, occupied their full share of the tables. The caterers of feasts were at that time relieved from all trouble as to the vegetables; no carrots, sallads, turnips, cabbages, or other edible roots, were produced in England; Queen Catherine herself, when she wanted a sallad, having (it is said) been obliged to dispatch a messenger for the purpose to Holland. Salted fish and meat, which were the general food of the common sort of people during the greater portion of the year, were

upon the present occasion but sparingly introduced, because they were provocations to drinking; and as the whole party were to go to church after the dinner to make their offerings, according to ancient custom, her ladyship submitted to the steward that it might be prudent to dilute the ale with water, lest any of the party, flustered with drink, should conduct themselves indecorously at the altar.

Sir Lionel and his family occupied the upper end of the cross-table at the head of the hall, a large saltcellar being placed in the centre, and the old observances retained as to the individuals of the household, who should sit above it or below it. In this, as in every thing else, the knight affected state. He never entered or quitted his principal sitting-room, or began a meal, without music, and as upon the present occasion the regular minstrels were all guests, he had placed trumpeters in the gallery, who, at a signal from himself, sounded a *noise* or flourish, when Dr. Wrench, his clerical secretary, pronounced a grace, and the meal began. As

all feasts have a family likeness to each other, and, however interesting to the parties, are apt to be rather revolting to the spectators, we shall leave much of the present to the imagination of the reader, contenting ourselves with stating that Dudley, who was seated beside Beatrice, would have enjoyed her animated discourse, as well as the bustling scene around him with much cordiality, could he have abstracted his thoughts from his unhappy cousin, who, instead of sitting in his own hall as the lord of the banquet, was imprisoned in a narrow cell above it, to be annoyed with the clatter and turmoil of guests, whom he was not even allowed to see.

Although easily recognisable as the principal personage in the hall, not less by the station he occupied, than by his striking figure and splendid dress, Sir Lionel in other respects might have been taken for a stranger to the party, since his countenance, unaffected by the clamour and hilarity with which he was surrounded, preserved its usual expression of a haughty seriousness, or a slightly-marked contempt. His

thoughts, indeed, were evidently wandering from the scene before him, to which however they quickly adverted when any omission of the ceremonies, and almost regal observances, which he exacted from all his servants in waiting upon himself, gave occasion for his stern and instant reprimand. The viands placed at his end of the board were of superior quality to the rest, and he had a page or cupbearer behind him, who occasionally supplied him with Romagna wine, or spiced Hippocras, from a silver tankard which seemed to be reserved for his special use.

From a sense of duty to her husband, whose magnificent style of living filled her with constant apprehensions of embarrassment and debt, Lady Fitzmaurice was for ever preaching the virtues of economy, and enforcing her precept by such petty savings as it fell within her province to effect, although they were but as so many drops redeemed from a perpetually flowing stream of extravagance. Thus actuated, she could be parsimonious and even mean, as we have shown in the considerations that had

influenced her in providing the present feast; but, however niggardly she might be in the theory, and in cold blood, her kind and hospitable heart expanded with a generous cordiality, and her care-worn countenance assimilated itself to the happy faces around her, when she witnessed their hearty enjoyment of the feast, and listened to the jovial sounds of mirth and laughter. As her conscience smote her for the penuriousness she had previously displayed, she performed a characteristic penance by going round to the different tables, and intreating the guests not to spare the mutton and veal, to which they were quite as welcome as to the cheaper viands. She inquired into the wants of each board, ordered fresh supplies as they were required, and even took an opportunity of whispering to the steward that he need not water the ale, as the company seemed to be of gentle and discreet bearing, and would not, she was well assured, do shame to their entertainment, by any irreverent or unbecoming demeanour in the church.

While she was thus bustling about, and dis-

regarding all the cold and stiff stateliness which, by the manners of the age, her rank rendered it incumbent upon her to observe, Beatrice's face had been kindling with an angry blush of shame. She bit her lip, fidgeted upon her seat, endeavoured by conversing eagerly with Dudley to withdraw his attention from such ignoble deportment; but when the direction of his eye, and the smile of ridicule upon his face, convinced her he had observed it, she lost all patience, and accosted her ladyship as she passed with a petulant and tart rebuke, beseeching her not to expose herself any farther by waiting upon such an inferior crew, but to let the officers, servants, and menials of the household, perform their duty, while she resumed her own by returning to her seat.

Although the manner, in which this advice was given, was not much more respectful than the matter, her ladyship received it with great meekness, exclaiming with a good-natured smile —"Lack-a-day, lack-a-day! daughter, I would not for a handful of silver groats do any thing

unseemly, but I could not sit still, if I thought these poor fellows, so merry and so happy as they are, needed aught to complete their good cheer. Bless them! it is a comfort to one's heart to look upon them; for though we often have greater folks and finer doublets at the Tor, we seldom hear such hearty laughter, or see such gladsome faces. They have made merry, and the feast is well nigh done; so, as you wish it, I will e'en sit me down again in my state." She had scarcely done so, when there was a cry of "Silence, silence! a speech from Master Captain Basset,"—a name which Dudley could hardly hear without indignation, when he recollected Cecil's words, and concluded that this was the same individual, of whose severities he appeared to stand in awe. On looking to the lower end of the principal table he beheld a coarse, square-set fellow, with black mustachios, whose fiery and blotchy face betrayed habitual potations, while his thick, hoarse speech, and blustering manner, attested the frequency of his recent applications to a large ale-jack, that stood empty

by his side. "My noble master, Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice," he exclaimed; "an' it please your worship, you have feasted us like a king, and now, whilom I can speak plain English, I thank you my master, and our good cateress her ladyship, and the bonny-browed Mistress Beatrice as well, and so we do all: answer, you scraping and piping rogues, answer! and fill a measure to all friends round county, who have a penny in their pouch, and a stout heart in their bodies, and a good sword by their sides, to bid defiance to all Sir Lionel's enemies, open or secret, shaven or unshaven, in cowl or cap, in thrum bonnet or scarlet hat. Shove it about, handle your jugs, fill your pots, wet your whiskers, and huzza for our host and hostess, and may they long live to kiss one another as merrily as cup and can."

After this specimen of ale-inspired oratory the healths were drunk, the cheers were given, and the party rising immediately afterwards from table, were arranged by the king of music and his officers, in proper order for proceeding

to the church, and making the customary offerings at Saint Mary's shrine. A Woodmote having been held on the same day, for the election of keepers and officers in the Chace, (as one of the Hungerford manors was termed,) as well as for killing the Saint-Mary buck, which they invariably presented to the abbot on our Lady-day, the Assumption, the wood-master and his men came to swell the procession of the minstrels, the chief keeper bearing the buck's head cabossed and moyed in silver, and all the others carrying green boughs in their hands. The minstrels, who were now collected in the great court, and joined as before, by the domestic band of Sir Lionel, were also ranked in their proper degrees and places, when the procession again set forth, headed by the knight on horseback. Dudley and Beatrice, also on horseback, followed the file, and the same numerous retinue of Sir Lionel's officers, servants, and retainers, most of whom were armed, brought up the rear. Upon starting, the foremost keeper blew a *seek*, to which all the others replied; when

they quitted the domain of the Tor House, he sounded a *recheat*, which was answered in the same manner; and upon reaching the abbey-gate, both keeper and minstrels struck up a loud and merry peal, which seemed to make the hollow chapels and cloisters of the sacred pile start, as they echoed back such unhallowed and unaccustomed merriment.

Glastonbury Abbey, at this period covering with its numerous chapels and offices not less than sixty acres of ground, and constituting one of the most venerable, extensive, and magnificent structures in England, could not be contemplated, even in its exterior, without a deep feeling of awe and admiration. The consciousness of its having been founded at the very first introduction of Christianity, the many miraculous circumstances believed to be connected with it, the recollection that it was the burial-place of King Arthur and other illustrious personages of history, the enormous possessions and revenues attached to it, and the well known-power and state of the abbot, which were scarcely less

than regal, all tended to hallow and exalt it to the mind; while the sense was not less forcibly struck by the solemnity of the gothic architecture, and the stupendous proportions of the whole sacred edifice.

However profound might be the reverence inspired by the view of the exterior, the feelings were almost overwhelmed by the sublimity of the scene that presented itself on entering the building, whose apparently interminable aisles, and successive tiers of lofty arches, were all veiled in the dim religious light admitted through scutcheoned and emblazoned windows, a mysterious medium which deluded, while it delighted, the eye, by concealing the extent of the pile, and thus affording the greater play to the imagination. The church, however, was in reality of a greater length than any cathedral in England, except old St. Paul's, while the magnificence and beauty of its embellishments were commensurate with the grandeur of the design. Beatrice having been requested by her father not to dismount, as he himself merely entered

the church in compliance with the ceremonial, and wished not his daughter to pay the abbot the compliment of visiting him, she remained on horseback, and Dudley would willingly have stationed himself by her side; but as Sir Lionel invited him to enter with them and view the building, as well as the proceedings of the processionists, he reluctantly quitted his horse, and joined them. To add to the solemn effect of the glorious edifice we have described, high mass was being celebrated, at the time he entered it, in one of the numerous and exquisitely enriched side-chapels with which it was flanked, so that although he could see none of the priests, ministrants, and choristers, a full-toned swell of harmony came pealing along the body of the church, in which the mellow tones of the organ and other wind-instruments were mingled with the deep notes of the monks, and the exquisite sweetness of youthful choristers, whose voices had been taught all the melodious intricacies of art; while the faint odours of frankincense and myrrh stealing upon the air and awakening ideas of the

Deity to whose service they were consecrated, at once steeped the senses in delight, and entranced the soul in a profound and holy fervour.

While Dudley, although not gifted with much sensibility, was thus forcibly impressed, he thought he could observe upon Sir Lionel's countenance a scornful smile, as he measured the building with his eye, and exclaimed in an ironical tone—"This is the vain pomp that hath swelled up the pride of prelates until they fancy the church their own house, and themselves the gods of it; but the hour is coming when this bloated pile, and the still more bloated pride it hath engendered, shall both burst like a bubble."

As this speech was little in unison with Dudley's present feelings, he made no reply to it, and the procession passed on until they reached the transept, or cross-aisle, leading down to the chapel of our Lady, in which the service was performing with great pomp. The building itself, in the richest style of the florid Gothic, received a much stronger light than that in the church, through numerous arched perforations, which

threw an unequalled airiness and elegance over the whole structure; advantageously displaying the clusters of slender columns as they shot loftily up, and were lost in the vaulted richness of the elaborately fretted roof, as well as the splendid carvings of foliage and fruit, tendrils and flowers, entwining each other in the compartments that separated the mouldings. Around the altar, blazing with wax tapers, jewels, and pyx, patins, chalices, cruets, crosses, censers and font of silver, stood the numerous sacred establishment of the building, all attired in the imposing splendour prescribed by the Romish ceremonial, and comprising every gradation and age, from the hoary standard-bearers, whose locks had been gradually whitened in the service of the abbey, to the blooming young choristers, and their still more juvenile brethren who were gracefully waving to and fro their fuming vessels of incense. But by far the most striking figure of the whole was the venerable abbot himself, arrayed in tunic and Dalmatic, a fringed maniple, embroidered with crosses, entwined about his

left arm, a surcingle, twisted like a rope, tied over his tunic, a grey amice on his head, with an emblazoned cross over the forehead, and an illuminated missal in his left-hand, from beneath which coloured rays seemed occasionally to flash, as the light fell upon the rubies and diamonds, jacinths and smaragds, of his numerous rings. Wearing these in compliance with prescriptive usage, as the property of the abbey, not his own, and as emblems meant to dignify the office, not its ministrant, he appeared to be the only person insensible of his magnificent investment; nor could any unprejudiced spectator deny, as he lifted up his aged features, and fixed his meek eyes beaming with devotion upon heaven, that the splendour by which he was surrounded served but to render more impressive the fervour of his piety, and the unaffected humility of his deportment.

Dudley, and the party to which he was joined, continued in the transept until the service was completed, when Sir Lionel, desiring them to go forward and make their offerings, while he him-

self remained where he was, the woodmaster advanced and offered up the buck's head, moyed in silver; all the keepers then wound a *morte* three times upon the horns, after which, each of them made a penny offering, the minstrels playing during the offering-time. The musicians, in their turn, deposited a penny each to the accompaniments of the horns, when the procession marched back towards the great church in the same order, and Sir Lionel advanced to make his own offering.

From the unusual circumstance of his appearing at all in the church, and from the notoriety of the feud existing between himself and the abbot, a deep interest was excited among all the spectators, but more especially with those attached to the sacred building, to mark the nature of his offering, as well as the demeanour of the two principals, who, though they had been so long opposing one another's plans, had scarcely ever so closely encountered as now. A low murmur ran through the religious throng, and they pressed slightly for-

ward, as Sir Lionel advanced, with a stately gait that made the marble pavement echo to his steps, and a stern look that seemed to bid defiance to the whole assemblage. Awed by his majestic figure, his formidable sword, to which so many deeds of blood were attached, his fierce eye, and his black flowing beard, not less than by his reputation for an alliance with the Powers of Darkness, the young choristers shuddered and shrank behind one another, as he passed them; while the monks themselves betrayed emotions, in which a sentiment of strong dislike seemed to be not unmingled with a mysterious fear. Without noticing their looks, or altering the expression of his own, Sir Lionel stalked forward until he approached a large image of Saint Mary, enclosed in a sort of shrine, which, on account of its exquisite workmanship, and the delicacy of its decorations, was always covered with a curtain, except when service was performed, on which occasions it was drawn up. On his arriving opposite to this figure, the curtain suddenly fell without being touched, an

ominous event, which occurring under such peculiar circumstances, and acting upon the preconceived opinions respecting Sir Lionel, might well startle the least superstitious observer, and which was instantly magnified into a miracle, when an unknown voice in the throng cried out that he had seen the image lift up its arm!

Consternation now sat upon every countenance; many of the gazers crossed themselves, and repeated their prayers in a whispering tone, others ejaculated words of terror; all drew back as he approached them; every eye was rivetted to him as if arrested by some appalling and portentous vision. Sir Lionel, however, passed on with unaltered stateliness and scorn; but he had no sooner deposited his offering upon the altar, than the large silver crucifix which was fixed above it, fell down amid the sacred vessels, with a discordant clash, that sent a thrill, an agony of awe, to every heart, and occasioned a cry of horror to burst from almost every lip. The young choristers, and the whole of the female visitants fled through the church,

shrieking in wild dismay. Some of the monks stood aghast and motionless, like staring statues of terror; others huddled together, and clung to one another, as if for mutual protection; while a third party imitated the example of their abbot, who, falling upon his knees, and clasping his hands, exclaimed in a voice, rendered loud and energetic by a mingled passion of piety and abhorrence,—"Begone from among us, thou unhappy man! back to the abodes of Dagon and of Bel! back to the fellowship of Satan, Belial, and Ashtaroth! Avaunt! avaunt! and avoid our presence! And ye, oh ye dæmons, who have thus boldly dared to invade this house of God, I exorcise ye by the great Tri-une, whose chosen temple ye have profaned;—by all the grace acquired for us; by the grace of faith conferred in baptism, of fortitude in confirmation, of charity in the eucharist, of justice in penance, of hope in extreme unction, and of prudence in holy orders, and by all holy men and women, the saints of God, who now inherit eternal glory, and by all their merits, that you remove your pre-

sumptuous power from this holy house of God, and remain here no longer!"

While he had been uttering this exorcism, which was part of the established form for expelling dæmons from a haunted house, Sir Lionel, surveying the kneeling pastor and his fear-stricken flock, with a look of contemptuous rage that swelled his nostrils, and even made his beard move up and down to their angry inflations, strode athwart the chapel, followed by the eyes of the whole assemblage, which continued immovably fixed upon his stately figure, until it was lost in the distant indistinctness of the church.

"Bring me abyssum," cried the abbot, rising up from his knees—"and holy water, and the crucifix, the sacred symbol of our faith; and let us pray unto Heaven and all its saints, for we are not able of ourselves to avoid the snares of the Devil. If the Lord said unto Job, (he quoted the Latin Vulgate,)—"the nose of the Leviathan pierceth through snares. Canst thou draw him out with a hook, or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?

Canst thou put a hook in his nose, or bore his jaw through with a thorn? Will he make any supplication unto thee? Will he speak soft words unto thee? Will he make a covenant with thee? Wilt thou take him for a servant for ever? Wilt thou play with him as with a bird, or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens? Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons, or his head with fish-spears? Behold the hope is in vain! Shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him?"—If we are thus helpless to trample upon Leviathan, how much more impotent are we to tread down Satan and the power of Hell! Wherefore, bring me quickly the sacred herb, and the holy water, and the blessed crucifix, and let us purify our defiled chapel, and implore the aid of Heaven and its saints, and all join in the Ave Maria Gratiâ, before we again raise the curtain, which the offended queen of Heaven has drawn before her, that she might not gaze upon one of the accursed, and a follower of Belial, Beelzebub, and Abaddon."

While the panic-stricken monks were slowly recovering themselves, and beginning to move about in execution of the abbot's orders, Dudley, who in the bewilderment of the moment had remained leaning against the column where he had first placed himself, at length started from his trance, and prepared to follow Sir Lionel. He had traversed the chapel in execution of this purpose, and was entering the main body of the church, when he felt himself twitched by the sleeve by some one behind him, and, as he stopped and looked round, he beheld friar Frank. Pointing to the entrance-door of the church, where, in the strong light that streamed through it, the form of Sir Lionel was still recognisable, the monk shook his finger impressively at him, exclaiming in his deep voice,

"Quare, quare hoc fecisti?
Ubi tale didicisti,
Inimice crucis Christi?"

and then turning to Dudley, he continued—"Had I not warrant, my son, when I bade

you 'ware the hawk? I trust you forgot not after matin-mass this morning to say as I bade you—" à cæcitate cordis, libera nos, Domine?" for so might there be hope that your eyes and heart would be opened to the nature of the Devil's vassal, beneath whose roof you were going to abide."

" Indeed, good father, I forgot it altogether, but I hope there could be no sin in the omission, as I never suspected——"

" Say not so, say not so; could you not suspect from what I told you, and are you not certain from what you have now seen, thát you are a dweller with one before whom the symbols of our religion fall prostrate, and at whose approach the holy queen of Heaven draws a veil before her eyes? He is great, powerful, wealthy, 'sed fide bonâ, lubrica sunt fortunæ dona:' wherefore, I say once more, if you would not be caught in the Devil's snare, and be made a bondsman of Beelzebub, avoid him and his house, as you would flee from the wrath to come."

"Such is my settled purpose, so soon as I have discharged the commission, with which I stand intrusted, and which a sense of duty, the discoveries I had previously made, and what I have now observed, all impel me the more resolutely to accomplish. If you again find me in his power when this is done, I vow to offer a silver crucifix to the shrine of St. Mary, three times more weighty than that which has been just thrown down."

"You are *now* in his power, and may do well to fulfil the vow if you escape; but 'ware the example of the Welshman, who, in a storm, vowed a taper as big as the mast of a ship, to be in port; but, on shore, paid our Lady with a little candle, offering her to hang him if she ever took him on the sea again."

"Fear me not, father, fear me not, and take hearty thanks for your friendly counsel, which shall not be lost upon me; but I may no longer tarry, for yonder I see Sir Lionel searching around as if he were awaiting me."

"By the holy blood of Hales! you would do

well to let him wait for you during the remainder of your life, for you are better sped where you are. When a bishop, who was saying his breviary, once received an order to wait upon Charlemagne, he first finished his holy office, and then told the king he would have come sooner, but that he had been speaking to a greater king than himself. So I tell you, my son, you are better engaged with a servant of Christ, although one of the humblest, than with the mighty Lucifer, even should he beckon you with a sceptre, and tempt you with a crown. He goeth about like a raging lion, seeking whom he may devour. Look not into his open mouth, but do your commissioned purpose quickly; fly from the accursed one, and then seek me out, that we may sing together, in gratitude for your deliverance,—Hosanna in excelsis! till when—salve et vale!"

The friar turned back towards the chapel, whence the sounds of the Ave Maria, chanted with more than usual reverence by the astounded monks, were already beginning to be heard,

while Dudley hurried forward to the gate of the great church. Sir Lionel had rode on with Beatrice; but a horse and servant being left for him, he mounted and presently overtook them. The presence of the daughter prevented him from making any allusion to the mysterious, if not miraculous, occurrences of which he had been a witness: Sir Lionel preserved a stern silence; and but little colloquy passed between his companions, as Dudley was not in a frame of mind for trivial conversation, and Beatrice was much too haughty to intrude discourse where it was not graciously welcomed, and eagerly returned. In this unpleasant mood, where all felt the awkwardness of the protracted silence, and yet each was too proud or too reserved to break it, they rode on till they reached the out-posts of the Tor House, though whose embattled gateway Dudley could not again pass, without a misgiving conviction that he was placing himself in the hands of a dark and dangerous man, who, having imprisoned the rightful owner, and usurped a power and a domain to which he was